

Two Sides of a Coin, a Stranger Things What-if story by Megawarrior101

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Summary: What if there was someone else in the fray? Someone who was able to keep the inevitable chaos from raining down on Hawkins, Indiana? Or at the very least, keep it in check?

1. Chapter 1: The Call

8:30AM read the clock on Monday, November 7, 1983 in Hawkins, Indiana. The sky was a light blue with a warm orange light coming from the rising sun, lighting up the sky and the clouds and while the moon had set on the other side. Kids would be waking up and rushing to get ready for school and come back home after eight hours to do their homework, parents would be getting ready to go to their jobs and come back after nine hours to spend time with their families. However in this particular town, there was a strange man who lived there that no one knew about. This particular man spent most of his time in bed, resting, waiting for the phone to emit it's loud, bothersome ring. This character blended in well into the crowd of civilians in the town of Hawkins. He is a master of disguise and unless you know him personally or have good discernment senses, you wouldn't even see him coming.

Working independently has its benefits. Not revealing his identity as a detective to the public means he doesn't have to worry about people bothering him, coming up to him every time something bad happens. Having no one over where he lives keeps where he is a secret. However, it also has its downsides. Such as-

RING! RING!

RING! RING!

"Damn it..." the detective grumbled in a groggy voice. He looked over at his clock; 8:35 AM. "It is WAY too early for this shit..." he grumbled again as he walked over and picked up the phone wired into the wall. "Hello?"

"Mornin'...Enigma. Can't believe you still wanna keep that name," said a gruff, loud voice.

"Hey Hopper, it's my choice. Now tell me; why do you wake me up at the ass-crack of dawn? I hate dealing with shit in the morning."

"Well, whatever. Listen up, I need you to come by the office in a few minutes. Joyce is apparently coming in about her son Will, who has

gone missing."

A loud sigh escaped the lips of the grouchy, rudely awakened detective. He cleared his throat and pursed his lips slightly as he growled, "Fine." and hung up the phone with a slamming noise on the other end. The chief of the Hawkins police department jumped slightly at the sudden noise and placed the headpiece of the office phone down.

2. Chapter 2: At Benny's

9:05 AM read the detective's watch when he arrived at the police station. There he saw parked were the other officers' cars, Hopper's "truck", and Joyce's car. Something notable about the woman's car was how hastily it was parked. Right then and there he knew something was up. As he entered the building, he greeted the secretary Flo and the others, grabbed a donut, and headed to Hopper's office. He heard Hopper being screamed at by the paranoid mother. The detective peered in the doorway, and Hopper held his hand up as if to say, "Hang on a sec." The detective waited outside, eating his donut and took out his notebook to write down the time and date of when he saw the way Joyce's car was parked. Joyce came out, looking shaken while holding a lit cigarette.

"Morning Joyce. I heard about Will." She simply looked at him with a distraught expression and walked away briskly.

"Don't worry. With me on the case, your son is going to be just fine." He said in a slight sarcastic tone.

All Enigma did was grunt when she went out the door. Hopper came out and stood in front of the detective with an annoyed look.

"Come on, give her a break with the sarcasm. She's stressed out about her son like any mother would be." Hopper said to Enigma as he got up and walked with him towards the door.

"Whatever, Hopper. You know damn well that I'm not empathetic towards anybody in the morning." Enigma growled at the chief as he walked outside with him.

"Still, you could just be a little nicer to people you know." Hopper replied as he walked to his car. Enigma however, simply walked right passed it, grumbling to himself about how being nice sounded stupid. "Where are you going?" The chief asked the detective.

"I'm headin to Benny's. That donut isn't gonna hold me down forever." Enigma grunted as his stomach growled loudly. He grimaced as he looked back at Hopper who was lighting a cigarette and shaking his

head and sighing.

"Alright then I guess." The chief said as he didn't bother to question the detective who kept walking. "Do you at least want me to give you a ride?" He asked the detective as he looked around the town, but looked back at the detective to find that he...wasn't there. Hopper simply looked around for where he could have possibly gone, with tons of questions in his head.

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9:30 AM read the detective's watch when he arrived at Benny's. Well, on the road to Benny's. That's right when he stopped dead in his tracks and looked behind him with a stoic expression. *The hell?* He thought to himself as he looked at his surroundings. Nothing but dead leaves, the asphalt on the road, dead trees, and the driveway to the restaurant. Despite being completely alone, it felt like someone was right behind him. *Weird.* "Hey. Someone there?" He called out to the trees and the empty area. No response. *Hmm...strange.* He then slowly walked over to the restaurant with his stomach roaring louder and a skeptical expression on his face, and entered the door.

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Hopper was sitting with another officer in front of three boys, Will's friends. There was a long-haired kid with freckles named Mike, a black kid named Lucas, and a kid with long curly hair and missing his front teeth named Dustin. Hopper had come to question where Will may have gone since he went missing. All he got was a bunch of random squabbling about the differences between *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* after Mike mentions a street called Mirkwood, which was actually the street to the boy's house. Finally, after many attempts to keep them focused, Hopper leaves and decides to head over to Will's. The officer accompanying the chief spoke up.

"Hey chief. You think we should get the detective on this?" He said.

"Nah, he's doing something else right now, getting...breakfast at Benny's." Hopper sighed, a bit annoyed.

"Uh huh, that's real helpful. You want to tell me why we asked for his

help?"

"He happened to be in town," The chief shrugged, "and I'm not gonna make this another town or state's problem."

3. Chapter 3: The Fateful Encounter

NOO! NOT MY BOY!...I want you to light this candle...manipulate this current of electricity...SHIT! was the last thought the detective had when he slipped and fell out of the tree. He landed with a loud THUD. His notebook fell on his head as he was getting up.

"Ooowwwwww...damn, how far was that drop?" snarled the detective as he looked up at the tree branch. As he stood up and put his notebook in his coat pocket, there was a crack of a twig behind him; he whirled around in response. "What? Wha-wazzat? Huh?" There was a little girl there, no older than twelve or thirteen by the looks of it. Her hair was shaved off, she was wearing what looked like a hospital gown. She looked petrified, scared, tired, and startled all at the same time. 3:45 PM read the detective's now slightly cracked watch. *Must've dozed off while I was waiting.* He stood up and started toward her. "Uh...hello." said the detective in a gruff tone as he approached. The little girl stepped back and looked like she would run away at any sudden movement. "Hey, hey, relax. I'm not going to hurt you." He stopped, knelt down and took slow steps till they were two or three feet from each other. "I want to help you." She stepped forward. The gown she was wearing had a slight tear on the bottom which went down slightly past her knees. The pattern of the gown made Enigma's stomach churn. "Kid..." *The hell...they experimented...on a kid?* "Here uh...come with me. It's about time you got something to eat." He held out his hand to the girl in a friendly manner, and she reached out with her left hand but she seemed very hesitant. The detective then noticed the numbers 011 on her forearm near her wrist, making his eyes widen in shock. *No wonder she's not trusting me, the way those bastards treated her I'm not surprised if she doesn't trust anyone.* "I'm not like those people. Believe me, I want to help you." He rolled up his left sleeve to reveal the numbers 002 tattooed into his skin, and she opened her mouth in shock. "I know how you feel." She then took his hand as Enigma walked back into the restaurant with the girl.

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9:06 PM read the detective's watch as they were sitting down.

Enigma was talking to Benny about their current situation. He got Benny's permission to stay after closing with the girl to try and get help. Enigma burned up the hospital gown, and Benny gave her a yellow t shirt. The three of them sat down together and talked.

"Your name isn't a number, and you are not an experiment. You are a little girl, and I am going to keep an eye on you. I'm uh, gonna keep you safe and make sure you're alright, ok?" Enigma asked the girl

"I'm gonna call social services and see what they think." Benny broke the silence.

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" Enigma asked in response.

"It's the only one I got. You got a better one?"

"Yeah. She stays with me for the time being."

"What? You don't even know who this girl is or where she came from. What about her parents?"

"You think I don't know that? What do they care?"

"They care because what if what you're trying to do is misinterpreted as abduction? Kidnapping?"

"Then her family gets their kid back. End of story."

A knock on the door interrupted the conversation. Benny and Enigma looked at each other and back at the door. Enigma had a bad feeling about this, for who would come at this hour? Immediately, he took Elle into the kitchen, kneeling.

"Elle, get behind the counter. Get down!" Enigma whispered to her. Benny opened the door to an old woman in a uniform and brown leather jacket. She was talking to Benny. What about? He didn't care. About who? He didn't care about that either. The reason was because the second he saw her face, he had a few flashbacks of the experiments done to him and she was present for them, which boiled his blood. He wanted to kill her, but that would give away where he was and that he was out there still. He had his hand on Elle's mouth and his arm around her waist to keep her quiet and calm. He could

feel her shaking like a leaf.

BANG!

Benny was killed in cold blood, without warning, for no reason.

"Run!" Elle ran through the restaurant out through the back, killing anyone in her way with her powers. Enigma followed close behind, making sure none of them followed him and Elle. It began to storm outside which made things hard for Elle and Enigma to find each other. The lightning made it disorienting for Elle and the thunder frightened her and made it hard to hear the detective yelling her name. And as much as Enigma could sense her, the noise and lights made it hard for him to hone in on her signature. Not long after, three flashlights lit the dark forest, accompanied by three children's voices. From a distance, he could see the lights showing on her. *No...no no, please God no...* He feared the worst. His eyes lit up like stars, showing a dim white light. Just bright enough to see three twelve to thirteen year old boys and Elle. He gave a sigh of relief knowing she was somewhat safe, but he was ready to leap in if it was necessary. Then he began to follow them, because he didn't want another kid to be retaken by whatever this corrupt government organization was. It happened once to him, and he won't let it happen again to someone else, especially not to a kid.

4. Chapter 4: Meeting a New Friend

9:31 PM read the detective's watch when he had found where they took Elle. It was one of their houses. *Don't worry kid, I'm here.* He waited in a high branch on a tall tree for the others to leave and the boy who's house this was to go to sleep, leaving him the opportunity to meet with Elle again. They appeared to have taken her into the basement of said house. *Perfect*, he thought. *There, I can be with her without having to worry about being discovered, just as long as the boy who lives in the house doesn't come down stairs...or the parents...or anybody else really.* After a few minutes, the other two boys left and the boy who lived in the house finally went upstairs to bed. *Now.* He landed on the ground with a soft tap. He then walked up to the door leading into the basement. He looked through the window only to be greeted with blinds. *Damn it, of course.* Through the slits, he could see that no one else was there, so he put his ear to the door and listened. Nothing. He softly knocked on the door, and after a few seconds he could see someone coming to the door. *Kid?* A few seconds passed as the door slowly opened, and he was greeted by the girl, now wearing a dark blue t-shirt and light grey sweatpants. She looked a little scared as she opened the door, but when she saw the detective she gave a small smile and started to tear up. He smiled back as he entered the house, closing the door behind him and taking his shoes off, putting them on a mat where they wouldn't dirty the floor.

"Heya, bucko. I thought I'd never see you again." Said the detective, as he kneeled to her height.

In response, she hugged him, sniffing and scared yet glad that someone she recognized was there. The detective was taken by surprise, not sure what to do. In all his years as a detective and as an adult, Enigma had never known what "love" was. So he hugged her back because he felt that if he were to tear away from her, it would make her feel detached and alone again. It felt...good. No one had shown him this kind of...interaction before. Soon, he could feel his eyes fill with...tears? He could hear her start to cry a little, not wailing sobs but little whimpers and sniffing.

"Scared." she said quietly. The detective rubbed her back before

slowly letting go.

"It's ok. I'm here now, and everything's going to be alright." The detective said as he wiped the tears and small nose of the scared child with his black trench coat sleeve. "I'm not going to leave you like that again." She poked his face in response.

"AH HA! I knew you were stalking us!" yelled a loud, young voice.

Enigma was greatly startled by this. He looked up to find a boy, no older than at least 12 with freckles and long hair for a boy, looking down. Enigma's first instinct was to attack him and defend Elle, thinking that he was a threat to her, so he got in front of Elle and started to stand up, his stature allowing him to tower over the smaller boy. The blackness of the trench coat, covering the lightbulb, made the him look like a towering silhouette as he prepared for his attack.

"WHOA WHOA WHOA WHOA! Calm down! I'm not going to hurt her! I'm her friend! Tell him, Eleven!"

The minute the boy called her Eleven, he got angry, but then he finally heard Elle yell,

"Friend!" while yanking his arm and pointing at the boy and back at her frantically. She looked petrified when she saw the detective like this. The boy, on the other hand, looked like he would run and get the cops. Enigma thought for a second and looked at his surroundings. *A couch, a car table with four folding chairs and a game board with little pieces, a closet, and...a tent made by a twelve year old? For this kid to hurt her made no sense. There's nothing here he could possibly use to hurt her. I guess I'm just being overprotective. I mean, how could this kid hurt her? That would make no sense.* Out of all the things in the basement, the tent was the most intriguing to the detective. He stepped away from the lightbulb, and looked at the boy, and back at Elle.

"...he's your friend?" The detective pointed at the 12 year old and said this lowly, still suspicious.

"...yes." Elle replied back quickly and quietly.

5. Chapter 5: I'll be back, I promise

The detective looked at the boy, and relaxed. He knelt down to the boy's height.

"My most sincere apologies, for scaring you and entering your house without your knowing or permission. You startled me, making me react in that manner. What is your name?" The detective said guiltily.

"Mike. Mike Wheeler, and it's cool. It was actually really awesome. How did you do that?" said the boy.

Excitable. Typical for someone his age, noted the detective. He rolled up his left sleeve to reveal his numbers. Mike's eyes widened and opened his mouth in awe, with concern in his otherwise amazed expression.

"You...you're in trouble too, aren't you?" he asked the detective.

"Was, probably still am. I'm not sure, but I know she is," he replied as he nudged Elle. "and based on your tone and expression, I can assume that you asked her the same question and got a yes."

Mike nodded.

"Then I assume that you know what kind of danger you'll be in if they know she's here, Mike?"

Mike nodded again.

"Hmph..." the detective studied the boy for a minute. "Very well then. Why don't you head off to bed then, little mate? I'll have a little talk with Elle."

"Sure thing! I forgot how late it was. Goodnight, Eleven! Goodnight, sir!" Mike exclaimed as he went upstairs.

"Night, Mike." The detective said. What a funny little kid, Enigma thought to himself. I suppose he's trustworthy. Tired, the detective flopped onto the couch and rested there. He looked over and saw Elle laying there on her own, awake, looking a little down. Poor kid,

laying there on her own. He waved his hand over at the girl to let her know he was still there. She looked up and gave a little smile in response, glad that she wouldn't be alone again at night. The detective yawned and started to nod off to sleep.

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....Let me go! I refuse to go into that accursed ROOM!...Damn you, BrennnNEEEEEERRRR! Let her go! She did nothing wrong!...Restrain him! Don't let him escape!...""AH!" Enigma snapped awake and sat up, eyes wide and breathing hard. Another nightmare. Damn it. He looked over at the makeshift tent to see Elle curled up in a little ball, asleep. He was still in the Wheelers' basement. He looked at his hands and checked his forehead. Normal. *Am I...sweating?* E looked at his hand and saw beads of sweat. He looked at his watch; 4:15 AM it read. He went over to the tent and knelt down to Elle's level, and ran his hand through her shaved hair. It felt different than his. *She got hers buzz-cut like I did back when I...was there.* He sat there and watched her sleep. It was...peaceful, strangely. Every bit of his mind told him to pick her up and hold her. However, it wasn't the part of his brain that comprehended things or figured things out. It was more...paternal, to say the least. How was this possible? Enigma had never been a father in all of his life, so why were these senses triggering like they did back at the restaurant?

Elle began to stir, and Enigma jumped at this. He was so caught up in his own thoughts he had almost completely forgotten about her. Then the detective did something he didn't think he would do. He went into the tent, sat down, and placed the child's head into his lap, stroking her hair. Somehow, he felt safe. He felt strong and at peace. He took off his black trench coat and laid it over her. It still confused him as to why he was doing this. Before he could think however, he nodded off back to sleep with his hand on the child's head.

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Enigma woke up to the sound of crunching. He looked and saw Elle attempting to wear his trench coat while eating what looked like a toaster waffle.

"Morning, Elle. Hey, did you steal my coat?" the detective said with a

joking smile. Elle looked at him with at first a startled look, then a sly little smile trying to hide in the massive coat.

"Heh. Goofnut." the detective said rubbing her head. She looked at him funny. "It's a name for someone who's being playful." She still looked confused. "Do you know what fun is?" She shook her head. The detective shook his head, "You have a lot to learn, kid." He wiped his mouth off as Elle took off the coat and gave it back to Enigma. "Thanks." He said as he put it on. Right as he did, Elle sat right in his lap, pulling the edges around her. The detective half smiled and put his hands in his pockets and pulled the edges completely together, even buttoning it up to her face. He looked at his watch; 9:15 AM. Crap, forgot about the search party. Whatever, he won't be that angry. A few minutes pass and Mike comes back down stairs, to show Elle around the house presumably. The detective wasn't exactly happy to see this.

"Hey, Mike. Shouldn't you be at school?" asked E.

"Oh yeah, I thought you'd have left by now. I was going to skip and look after her, but I guess you got it under control." Mike replied.

The detective looked down at the girl. "You want to stay here? I have to go somewhere for a little bit." Elle looked back up at him and said,

"Stay." The detective nodded and unbuttoned his coat and she got up from his lap. He got his shoes on to leave. Before he could he felt a tug from behind him. He turned around to see Elle holding the end of his coat. "Stay."

"Sorry, kid, but I can't stay forever. Don't worry, I'll be back in the afternoon. Ok?"

She gave an adorable pouty face in response. He ran his fingers through her hair. "Go have fun with Mike. I'll be back. I promise." The detective shut the door behind him as he set out for the office, leaving Elle with Mike.

6. Chapter 6: What Really Happened to Will

"Flo, where's Hopper?" The detective asked the secretary of the police department.

"He left an hour ago to the Byers' house." she replied back.

"Thanks." Before the detective left, he grabbed a few donuts.

"No problem, honey." Flo said as the detective headed out.

On the way to the Byers' house, Enigma noticed Joyce at the shop where she worked. She appeared to be looking for something. He decided to ask her some questions about what Hopper had found out back at her house. When he entered the door, it was then that he noticed how tall he was when he found Joyce checking out with a phone and he seemed to tower over her and a little over the cashier, who looked to be the manager. He looked at her, and back at the manager.

"Whatever she is buying, I will pay for it." he then said. After Enigma paid for a telephone and a pack of cigarettes, they headed out to Joyce's car.

"You didn't have to do that, you know." She then said on the way to her car. Stressed. I don't blame her, not after what happened to her kid.

"Think of it as an apology for being rude to you yesterday. I'm sorry if I wasn't the nicest guy back at the station. I haven't had this kind of case in the last few months, so it's kind of hard for me to sympathize with others." the detective said, putting away the phone and giving Joyce the cigarettes.

"Don't worry about that. That can't be the only reason why you came to see me." she said, taking the cigarettes and lighting one, inhaling deeply on the thing, and exhaling smoke.

"You're right, it's not. I need to stop by your house. With your permission, of course."

At this she got upset. "Why?! Hopper was JUST THERE! Why do YOU need to go snooping around my house?!" Yep, stressed. Definitely stressed.

"Because I can see things and smell things that Hopper can't. He might be good at finding clues and putting the pieces together to a basic scenario, but me? I can do so much more. I could probably even found out what really happened. Also, calm yourself. I will never know or understand how you feel, but I have never given up on a case. And I won't start now."

"...Alright, alright, you can come."

"Thanks, Joyce." said the detective as he walked off in some random direction.

"Where are you going? Don't you have a car? Do you want to ride with me?" yelled Joyce as she started the car.

"Don't worry, I know a shortcut!" yelled the detective as he faded into the crowd.

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20 minutes passed until Joyce got back home. She got out of the car and brought the new telephone with her, when she heard someone walking around talk to themselves.

"Hello?" she said a little scared.

"Oh, hello Joyce! Just looking around the house and the shed, gathering clues." replied the voice of the detective.

"Could you let me in please? There might be something I've missed."

"Sure, sure." the mother stuttered as she let the detective in her house. The detective took her phone off her hands and carried it in for her. As he looked inside, he noticed SEVERAL things that were off to him. He set the phone down and the first thing he did was go to the phone and noticed the burn marks on the headset. *Irregular. A storm couldn't have done this sort of damage. For a storm to mess with the telephone poles is one thing but this, this is another.*

"When did this happen?" he asked, turning to her.

"Just last night. I got a call and I couldn't hear anything besides scratching and what sounded like growling noises, but then I heard what I thought was my little boy." The worried mother was starting to get upset, so the detective held her hand, saying,

"Shhhh, it's alright I'm here now. I'm gonna figure out what happened last night. Ok?" She nodded and let the detective do his thing. Hmm, a small hole in the wall. From the lock on the doorknob. "It appears he was chased by something or someone, judging from this hole. Must've really wanted to get away from whatever it was." He then went along the carpet and the closed bedroom doors, noticing things no one else would've. "He thought you were here, so he tried to get you for help, but you weren't here. He was frantic about it, running back and forth to your doors banging on them." Seeming to be following something on the ground, Enigma went outside and looked at the shed with Joyce close behind him, worrying nonstop about Will. "He sought refuge in the shed." noted the detective, walking over to the shed. "Stay back." He said sternly to Joyce. Pulling out his magnum, he slowly reached for the door, with Joyce gripping his shoulder. Then he abruptly yanked the door open his gun pointing straight ahead. "Nothing...You can let go now."

"Sorry." He went to the workbench and saw...bullets? An air rifle? *The way the bullets are arranged show desperation in defending oneself. The rifle's sweat prints show the kid's fear of whatever it was that was chasing him. The way it was on the ground revealed that the boy was taken.* The detective then unscrewed the lightbulb and inspected the fuse. "It's brand new, I replaced it yesterday." Joyce explained. He nodded in response. *If the lightbulb is new, then why is it already a quarter of the way burnt?* The detective then screwed the lightbulb back in, and began muttering to himself, putting the pieces together.

"So then that means that...but then...so then...however...that would mean that...the hell?" It was at this point that the detective noticed a slimy pinkish-reddish substance on a vent. He smelled it. It's nothing I've ever seen OR smelled.

"What? What do you see?" Enigma jumped; he'd forgotten she was still there.

"Nothing, just some cobwebs. Come back to the house, and I'll tell you what I've pieced together."

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"So, here's what I think happened. You said Hopper found his bike by the road, yes?" the detective asked.

"Yes, yes he did." Joyce replied back, with a cigarette in her shaking hand.

"Ok. Will was on his way home from the Wheelers' house when he saw something that must've frightened him, causing him to fall off of his bike. It was nighttime so he didn't see what it was. He ran home leaving his bike behind, slamming the door into the wall causing the hole in the wall, then locking it. He then ran over to his brother's door and your door trying to...Joyce? Are you ok?" the detective asked with concern as the terrified mother looked more and more scared as the detective spoke. He gently took her hand and held it, and she squeezed his in response. "...trying to wake you up to get help. Eventually, he saw the creature or person in the window and ran out the door to the shed to get a weapon to defend himself. He locked the door and hastily grabbed his air rifle and bullets and frantically tried to load it. As soon he was ready, he was...you know." The mother then broke into tears and put her head into her hand. The detective went over and hugged her, and she cried into his shoulder. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to make you cry." the detective apologized.

"No, thank you for everything." She said.

"I WILL get your son back." the detective reassured her, she nodded in response. The detective got up and left, but not before replacing the phone and asking "Are you going to be ok on your own?" She nodded again. The detective reluctantly left and Joyce watched him leave out the window. A fog swept through, to the point where she couldn't see him anymore. A few seconds later, the fog was gone and so was the detective.

7. Chapter 7: I'm here

11:50 AM read the detective's watch as he arrived back at the Wheelers' home with sandwiches for himself, Elle, and Mike. He knocked on the back door softly. Nothing. He jiggled the door handle. Locked. He looked around the house for some way to get in. He was stealthy about it though, as he noticed a car in the driveway. *Shit, one of the parents is home.* Enigma kept walking around the house until he saw Elle in one of the rooms going into the closet with Mike in there with her. *I don't blame him. His parents can't find out about either of us, let alone the fact that he's got a girl in his room.* He waited until Mike left the room to go up there. When he left, Enigma "tree-jumped" until he was on level with the window to Mike's room. Then he jumped onto the roof of the house, landing with a soft tap. He then climbed along the side of the house and attempted to open the window. *Oh, thank god.* thought the detective when he found that the boy kept his window unlocked. He then carefully and stealthily climbed into the room, and quietly shut the window, locking it. He took out the subs to find them unharmed, resulting in him giving a sigh of relief, and set them on the dresser. A few seconds passed when he heard sniffing from the closet. He opened the closet to find his little girl balled up crying. The instant Enigma put his hand on her, Elle looked up and leapt at him arms wrapping around him, still crying but it was lessened. He picked her up and held her in his arms, rubbing her back. *No doubt that being in there must've triggered another painful flashback.* When she was done, she looked at the detective who was holding her in his arms smiling somewhat, wiping her eyes glad that he was back. He smiled back and kissed her on the forehead. "Hey. I brought lunch."

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6:15 PM read the detective's watch as he was teaching Elle how to play chess. They remembered to be quiet because Mike and his family along with his friends who had come over earlier were having dinner upstairs. While E liked the ever-excitable Dustin, Lucas...was questionable. He didn't like how Lucas treated Elle, not one bit. *Brat.* Enigma killed time by teaching Elle some more words and how they went together. He gave Elle the rest of her sandwich and some of

Mike's untouched sandwich from the fridge downstairs. There was no doubt that he loved the girl. Not in an intimate way, but in the way that a father loved his daughter, weirdly enough. At around 9:06 PM, Enigma decided to get Elle to sleep. Elle was on the couch this time, as Enigma insisted that it was more comfortable than that makeshift tent. After covering her with the blanket and giving her the most comfortable pillows, Enigma left for unknown yet important reasons. Elle didn't want him to leave but Enigma told her that he would be back.

"Whenever I leave, wait for me, and be patient, for I will be back. It might be very soon, or very long. Either way, I will always come back to you." promised the detective to the child. "...no matter what." After kissing Elle on the forehead, he headed out the door, locking and closing it behind him, disappearing into the darkness of the night.

8. Chapter 8: Something Sinister

Jonathon was out in the woods looking for his brother. He went to his deadbeat father's and he wasn't there, he wasn't at the school. On his search, he found Nancy Wheeler and Steve Harrington with his friends, Tommy and Carol, having a "low-key" party. There was another girl with curly red hair wearing glasses and a blue coat. For some reason, Jonathan took pictures of Nancy and Steve, using the brush around him as camouflage. He jumped when he heard footsteps on his right.

"A wise man would know better than to be spying on some people at a midnight party." said a tall dark figure in the woods.

"I-I wasn't spying. I was just looking for my brother." Jonathan stuttered quietly.

"Ah, don't worry about it. I don't judge." said the figure as he walked into the light, revealing himself as the detective, towering over the teenager. "I know you like Nancy."

"Oh, you're that detective mom talked about. Why are you bothering me? And no, I don't. How would you know if I did, anyway?"

"Eh, I can tell based on how you angle the camera and wait until she's in the shot alone or in most of it at least. It's simple really. Also, part of the reason why I'm out here is because I wanted to meet you, personally. Enigma Silverstein. High class detective. I'm helping out with finding your brother. " said the detective, shaking Jonathan's hand.

"Jonathan. Jonathan Byers. And please, don't call me Johnny, or tell my mom I was out here."

"Not a problem." Enigma stayed with Jonathan as Jonathan took pictures. A few minutes passed when he saw presumably Nancy's friend sitting on the diving board alone while the others went inside. She had a towel around her hand from cutting herself trying to cut open a can of beer. They shouldn't even be near the stuff. Then he saw a drop of blood fall into the pool. Right as it hit the water, he felt

something and the lights in the pool flickered off. Another disturbance...it feels more...disturbing than Elle's...what could it be? He grabbed Jonathan's shoulder.

"We have to leave. Now." He told him sternly.

"Why? There's nothing out here. Why are you still here anyway?" Jonathan retorted.

"I came to investigate something. I know what it is now. Lend me your camera."

"No. Why should I?"

"Just give it to me, I won't break it." Enigma said as he took the camera from the teenager. He focused on where the girl on the diving board was. *Wait for it...wait for it...NOW!* the detective thought to himself as he took the picture. The instant he did, the girl was gone. Jonathan was just as confused as the detective.

"What was that?" He asked him. The detective gave him back his camera. "One thing's for sure. It's definitely something...sinister."

9. Chapter 9: Tattletale Bitch

A day had passed since the incident at the Harringtons' house. Enigma had instructed Jonathan to render the pictures in the school when he had the time and that he would meet him there to take the pictures, in case anyone saw them and would potentially rat out on Jonathan. He told the teenager to expect him when he least did and to be aware of his arrival. Jonathan was just finishing rendering the photos and hanging them in the room when a girl went in there got a glimpse of the pictures and quickly left. Jonathan was scrambling to get the pictures in his bag when the detective came, spooking Jonathan slightly, as Jonathan hadn't been expecting him.

"Someone saw you and the pictures. Quickly, put the pictures in the bag and give the bag to me. Is the camera in there?" the detective said with urgency.

"Yeah, but why do you need the bag?" the teenager asked as he handed Enigma the bag.

"That girl who just saw the pictures is probably off telling Steve and his friends as we speak. I will walk with you. He will want to chew you out for the pictures out in the parking lot after school. If my thoughts are correct, they are going to rip up the pictures and break your camera." the detective looked around and saw the girl walking away briskly, as he was putting the small book bag underneath his massive coat. He knew where she was going.

"Ok fine, but why do you have to walk with me?"

"In case you need my protection."

...

The detective and the teenager had made it outside to the parking lot to find Nancy, Steve and his friends...and that little tattletale bitch. Perfect. Now they know about Jonathan being there last night. Enigma had to protect the bag at all costs, so he buttoned up the coat, but kept his hand near his magnum. "Stay close to me." he said to Jonathan.

"Hey, Johnny." said a voice. It was the voice of Steve Harrington, with his friends Tommy, Caroline, and the tattler. Nancy was there too with Steve. *Doesn't surprise me.*

"What were you doin' last night? Spying on some people, maybe? Ha ha ha!" laughed Troy and Caroline obnoxiously.

"N-no, I was just looking for my brother." Jonathan stuttered out.

"Oh yeah? Then why do you have a bodyguard following you around? Scared, Jonathan?" taunted Steve, Troy chiming in.

"Come along, Jonathan. These delinquents are not worth our time." the detective told Jonathan.

"What's the matter, Jason Voorhees?" chuckled Steve. "You hiding something, or are you scared, man?" The detective didn't seem care about the teenaged dickwad and moved on with his hand on Jonathan's shoulder to Jonathan's car. Steve and Tommy kept getting in the way.

"Come on, let us go. I can assure you that we did nothing to offend you." reasoned the detective.

"No way man, not with that potential stalker you're puppy guarding." Steve taunted yet again. "Yeah, don't think I don't know that you were taking pictures at our place last night. Probably saw everything, didn't you?" he said towards Jonathan, who just looked at the ground and shifted uncomfortably. Nancy just looked at him, with a look of pity.

"I said to let us go!" the detective commanded as he pushed Steve flat on his ass, who scrambled to get up. He spat on the ground near Enigma's foot.

"Whatever." said Steve. "Hey, stalker! How much is this gonna cost you?" he said as he picked up a rock to throw at the windows of Jonathan's car.

"No! Please don't!" Jonathan pleaded, but Troy held him back.

"Steve come on! Stop! Leave it alone!" Nancy yelled.

"Tch, after what he did, and what he saw?! No! I'm not gonna let this slide! Let's see his deadbeat mom pay for this!" Steve taunted as he rose the rock. Having had enough of this, Enigma started to walk over to stop Steve. He was annoyed and angry from this pathetic waste of time, and you could hear his footsteps get louder. *This is why I don't work with these pathetic little shits. Jonathan at least has some decency to know what he did was wrong. If only that damn tattler hadn't opened her goddamn mouth.* Caroline and the tattler got in the way, but Enigma backhanded both of them, punching the tattler, and with no effort, send them flying for a few feet. Tommy held his arm out to stop the detective. In response, the detective said "Out of my way," punching Tommy directly in the side of the skull. Hard. He collapsed in pain, holding his head and letting Jonathan go. Right when Steve was about to bash the rock into the windshield of Jonathan's car after bashing it on the side of the trunk, a strong hand forcefully took the rock out of his hand and effortlessly slammed it into his stomach. In the immense amount of pain, Steve doubled over and collapsed onto his knees, yelling and groaning. It felt like a train just rammed right into his stomach, and it was scary looking up into the eyes of this tall, lanky, strong guy for Steve. Enigma threw the rock into the woods and yanked Steve up by his collar with one strong hand.

"Don't bother me, or this boy ever again. Do I make myself clear, you little SHIT?!" the detective yelled at him, pointing at Jonathan.

"Y-y-yeah man, just leave me alone, please!" Steve said, looked up at him. The detective dropped and watched the once arrogant and cocky adolescent now a scared little coward crawling away. Then he and his friends ran off to the bus for the homecoming game. Nancy started to go with Steve, but then looked back at Jonathan, stopped, and walked towards him. All the detective did was brush off his coat and took out the bag from his coat and gave it to Jonathan.

"Oh, uh, thanks." he stuttered out as he took the bag.

"Not a problem." the detective then walked off without Jonathan. *Girl like Nancy shouldn't be anywhere NEAR these idiots*, was the only thing the detective thought as he walked off, disappearing into the woods, as he had more important things to worry about.

"Jonathan, is it true? Did you take pictures of us last night?" Nancy

said, not upset, but filled with pity towards the quiet boy, who couldn't even look her in the eye. All she got was silence. "Jonathan, be honest. Did you take pictures of me last night at Steve's house?" she said, a little more sternly.

"...yeah, yeah I did." Jonathan replied quietly, slowly raising his head. He reached into his bag and hesitantly pulled out the pictures and gave them to Nancy. She looked them as Jonathan nervously watched her reaction. At first it was a sorrowful expression, then it went to a little creeped out, .

"Why did you take these, Jonathan?" she asked. Silence again, but not for long. After a sigh, Jonathan began to explain.

"I...I WAS looking for my brother, don't get me wrong. I thought he might be in the woods, knowing him. Then I came across Steve's house and saw that you were there. Every part of me said to just keep going and to look for Will, but I just couldn't help myself. I took the pictures because I couldn't help the fact at how...how..." he trailed off.

"How what?" she asked, a little impatient.

"I couldn't help the fact at how...pretty and nice you are." he struggled to say. It was probably his first time admitting this to a girl.

"Oh, uh..." Nancy blushed slightly at this comment.

"Well, see you around." he said, taking back the pictures, getting his keys and getting in the car.

"Jonathan, wait-" Nancy said as Jonathan drove off. She was holding onto the picture of Barb as he left.

10. Chapter 10: New papa?

"Hmmmmmm..."

"...Check mate!"

"What?! But how?! Got me again! You're getting good at this game, Elle." Enigma commended the little girl after she won another game of chess against the detective. She gave a small smile as the detective rubbed her head. He and her have been playing the game since two days ago, and he was glad to see her improving, especially this fast. He wanted to ask her the question, and now seemed like the best time. *Well honestly, when is there really the best time to ask?*

"You like being with me, don't you?" he asked. The girl nodded quickly in response. The detective chuckled deeply as he began to reset his side of the board when he heard her speak softly and quietly.

"...new papa?" she asked nervously. The detective paused as he looked up at her a bit confused. He then examined her expression and body language. *From that tone of voice, her expression, and her breathing, her old "papa" didn't treat her right.*

"Er...w-well...only if you want me to." the detective reassured her, or at least tried to. It didn't do a whole lot, except worry her more. The detective, deciding that he shouldn't try to get her to talk about it, ended up doing something he knew he shouldn't do, but he has to know.

"Only do this if you're comfortable, ok? I want you to use the toys down here to show me what they did to you." he said. After being hesitant about this, she did so. Using the various little toys lying around, Elle illustrated what the detective deduced were the events that took place when she was a child.

"Me...Papa...bad men...Demogorgon..." we're names she would give to the game pieces and little toys, making noises and made the pieces move in certain ways to show what happened to her. The guilt-ridden detective sat there and watched, piecing together the toys and what

they were doing connected with her past. He was getting more and more moved each time she showed a new scene and as it played out, his brow quivering more and more and he became full of regret for making her do this. He could feel her pain as it grew and grew, which was evident from her voice continuously welling up and getting more and more shaky. As soon as the detective saw her shed a tear and heard her sniffle, he instantly hugged her and gently pulled her into his lap, slowly bringing the loose edges of his coat together around them both. As she snuggled into him, he pulled her closer and rested his head on hers, kissing her forehead occasionally.

"I'm...so sorry. I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to make you cry. I know I shouldn't have asked you to do that, but I had to find out what your old papa was like. I want you to feel safe when you're around me," he wiped her eyes when he said this. "I'm nothing like your old papa. I will not make you do anything you don't want to do. I will never put you through those painful experiments again. I will not force you to do anything if you aren't ok with it or if you don't feel like you can. If you fail or fall short at something, or anything at all, come to me, and we will make it right. Do not be afraid to tell me or ask me anything, or if you are scared, for I will not be angry and I will come, I will comfort and help you. I will answer your questions and give you the best advice that I can give. That is what a true father does. What that man gave you was fake. I assure you, I am not fake." The detective explained all of this to Elle, hoping that she would understand. When he was finished, she kind of just looked up at him, seemingly processing all of this. *Oh no...did I say too much? Did I overwhelm her? Did I say something wrong? Did I -* Enigma progressively got more and more nervous and scared when he could feel something lightly jabbing his chest. He looked down to see Elle poking him there.

"Sorry, kiddo. Got, uh, lost in my own thoughts. What do you need?" he said gently.

"...dad..." she said softly, pointing up at him. The detective wasn't sure why, but when he heard this word, he could feel his heart wrench, for a lack of a better term. His eyes start to fill fast with tears as he can feel his face start to tense up and his throat close a little.

"...what?" he managed out in a shaky voice.

"...Dad..." she said again, a little louder, pointing at the detective more boldly. Tears streaming down his face and profuse sniffing were the only thing that the detective could respond with as he was overcome with...joy? In all of his life, the detective had almost never cried for any reason except sadness and loss, but now he was so overcome with joy that he couldn't even think straight. *Tears, sniffing? Out of...joy? I've never heard of this before in my life. If it feels so good, then why am I crying?* At that moment, nothing else mattered. Not the case, not going to the library. A kid who he had been looking after. A kid who he had been looking after for a few days had just called him dad. A hand was laid on his face. "...sad?" said a crying Elle. The detective kissed her cheek and hugged her closely and tightly, saying,

"No, I am...good. Better than I've ever been. Are you happy?" Through sniffing, he could hear her say "Yes..." "Good, and I want to keep you happy. I will take care of you and make sure no one is going to hurt you. And no one is going to change that."

11. Chapter 11: Meeting the Eldest Wheeler

3:05 PM read Enigma's watch as he waited with Elle outside. After Elle showed the boys that Will was hiding somewhere using the Dungeons and Dragons pieces and game board last night, the boys formed a plan. After school, they would meet Elle after school by a telephone pole and go look for where Will was hiding with Elle as their guide, as she seemed to know where he was. Enigma would then go to meet up with Hopper at the library to get information about...something. The detective didn't know at the time as to why Hopper wanted to meet up with him. *Probably to yell at me for not being a huge help for the case.* He looked down at Elle to see her staring at a stray cat. He put a hand on her shoulder, snapping her out of whatever it was she was thinking about, looking back up at him. At first she had a grim expression, but then she relaxed and smiled a little. A bicycle bell could be heard behind them. They turned around to see Mike and the boys. Right away, Elle and the detective noticed a scratch under Mike's chin. *Bullies, no doubt. I can't say I'm surprised. Kids like them must get it all the time.*

"Ready, Elle?" he asked. She nodded, went over and sat in the back of his bike with him and rode off with the boys, but not before waving goodbye to her "new dad". The detective waved back and walked around the house, disappearing from her view.

...

Nancy had gone back to Steve's house. She was looking for Barb, as she couldn't find her when she had left last night. She saw Barb's car, which was strangely still there. She went into Steve's back area with the pool, and Barb wasn't anywhere to be seen. She then heard a rustling in the brush and went over to see what it was. "Barb!" she continuously called, trying desperately to get ahold of her friend. She heard something run across the brush. She called again, "Barb!" No response. She was starting to get scared now, ready to run at any sudden event. Footsteps approached her, as she backed away from the source.

"Why would a girl like you be doing back here?" said a sarcastic voice, getting closer.

"I...I'm looking for my friend." she replied, trying to sound brave as she backed away from the source.

"What? Did she leave you behind, or have something that was yours and never gave it back?" it continued. Nancy backed into a corner, scared of whoever was talking to her.

"Relax, Nancy. I'm not gonna hurt you."

"How do you know my name?"

"Your brother Mike told me." the voice revealed itself to be a tall, lanky man with a black trench coat. The same man from the high school parking lot who had beat her boyfriend and his friends to defend Jonathan.

"You...you're the guy from the parking lot earlier." she said to him, still ready to run at any sudden movement.

"Yeah, it's me. Enigma. Enigma Silverstein. High-class detective. How are you doing this afternoon, young lady?" he asked politely, with a friendly hand stretched out.

"Um...I don't know. Ok? I guess..." she said, hesitantly shaking the man's hand. "Why did you have to beat up my friends AND boyfriend like that?" she said accusingly, pulling away.

"Guys like them, especially your boyfriend, never listen to reason or words. Someone like you shouldn't even be anywhere near them. They're always trying to pick a fight, or seeking dominance. I was merely putting them in their place. Besides, YOU never even stuck up for any of them or told me to stop. So the real question is why didn't you try to stop me?" the detective said coolly, brushing off his coat. They then began to walk around the area.

"I don't know, I froze up. Still, it wasn't necessary. Like how Jonathan had been taking pictures of me last night. Why did he do that?"

"Isn't it obvious? He confessed his mistakes, tried to make amends the best he could. He likes you."

"Hold on. What?! He likes me? Then why didn't he just say that he

does?"

"He's not exactly outgoing, like you. He's an introvert, someone who is shy in public. He's not very revealing about his feelings and thoughts about something, like an extrovert is. Honestly, I thought you knew that before I even told you. Are you really that unobservant?" the detective said, kind of annoyed.

"Ok, relax. Besides, I'm with Steve, so we couldn't be together."

"That dickwad?" the detective then laughed loudly and deeply.

"Hey! We love each other, and you can't do anything about it!"

"That guy? He doesn't love you, he just likes how you look and that you gave up your virginity just like that. You're just seeing a façade of how he looks. I've known enough guys to know the difference." the detective kept laughing, aware that he nearly gave himself away.

"Wait, you were there too?" Nancy asked nervously.

"What? No. I can tell just by looking at you and how other people down the halls look at you. It's not hard for me. I'm not a detective for nothing, you know." he said, calming down from laughing so much. Nancy made a pouty face in response.

"Oh relax," he said, tapping her on the shoulder with his hand. "In all honesty, you're better off with Jonathan. At least the guy has the decency to know that what he did was wrong."

"For being a creep with a camera last night? Yeah, REAL decent."

"And Steve essentially raping you is any better?" Silence was all he got. "You know, Jonathan took the pictures because he likes you, not because he wanted your body. He likes you for who you are, not what you are. It's what's in here that counts," he points at where his heart would be, "not how big those are." he points at her chest. Nancy looks up at him, then ahead of her, thinking. "As cheesy as it sounds, it is 100% true. I'll leave you to think about that."

"Wait-" And just like that, he was gone. She looked around her surroundings, left and right, behind. It was as if he was...never there

to begin with.

...

7:30 PM read Enigma's watch when he arrived at the library. He was later as he had grabbed a bite to eat before arriving. When he saw that Hopper's car already there, he knew that he and another deputy must be finding out something. They probably just need him to evaluate it. But before Enigma could reach the last step, immediately Hopper and a deputy rushed out the door and got in the car.

"Hey guys, where are you going?" Enigma asked.

"Meet us at the lake!" was all Hopper said before he drove off with his deputy.

"Wait? What? Why? Damn you." grumbled the detective as he ran off into the woods.

12. Chapter 12: Will?

When the detective arrived to the scene, night had fallen. Blaring sirens and fire trucks and police cars and ambulances were all over the place. The detective turned his head to see the boys and Elle hiding behind a fire engine. As he quietly approached them, he saw Elle turn and whisper,

"Dad!" Enigma knelt down with his arms stretched out and hugged her as she ran to him.

"It's good to see you too, honey. Mike. Boys."

"Hey." The detective walked over to them quietly.

"So what's goin on?" he asked them. Mike piped up.

"They found someone in the lake."

"That so?" the detective asked. "I'll go check it out. Stay here with the boys." he told Elle. He walked over, only to be pushed back.

"Guys, come on. What the hell? I'm a detective, damn it." he said.

"Sir, just stay back. We need you to stay back."

"The hell I'm staying back. At least let me see who it is." he retorted, and they let him go. When he saw who it was, he was shocked. "Son of a bitch. It can't be..." he said. "Thanks, for nothing." He said walking away, but not before picking up a state trooper and throwing him into the water with a pissed look on his face.

"Waste of my goddamn time." He grumbled as he walked away. He walked around to the fire truck to find a crying Mike lashing out at Elle.

"You were supposed to find Will alive! You betrayed us! I can't believe you! I thought we were friends!"

"Mike..." was all Elle said as Mike rode away, his friends following shortly after. Enigma knelt down and put his arm around Elle as she

teared up a little. She wrapped her arms around him. "My fault..."

"No...not your fault," the detective reassured her, hugging her warmly and rubbing her back. "They just...misinterpreted what you said. It's not your fault, and it's no one's fault."

13. Chapter 13: Home

Enigma and Elle were walking in the woods together. Mike lashing out at Elle left her a little shaken, leading to Enigma deciding not to take her back to Mike's house. Instead, he decided to take her to his house.

"If Mike saw you again, he'd almost certainly yell at you again about how it was supposedly your fault that they found Will dead, and I don't want you to have to go through more blame than you already have." he explained. Elle nodded in agreement, but looked a little sad as she had pretty much crushed Mike's and his friends' hopes of finding Will. Enigma noticed this, saying "For now, it would be the most ideal thing to do. You'll get to see them again, don't worry. I'm just saying that we should give them some space to cool off from being angry." Elle looked down at the ground for a second, then looked up at Enigma.

"Ideal thing...to do." she said, yawning.

"Yes, it means the best thing to do, the thing that makes the most sense." he explained as he put her on his back, carrying her by her legs as she wrapped her arms around his neck, resting her head on his back. "Don't worry we're almost there." he assured her.

Soon, the forest around them turned into a long hallway with a series of doors with numbers on them. Elle looked around herself, confused. Weren't they just in the woods just a few seconds ago? She tapped his shoulder and gave him a confused look.

"Oh, you're wondering about how we're here when we were just in the woods? Uhhhh...it's one of my gifts, like your telekinesis." he said, gently. As Enigma looked for his apartment, Elle looked around the slightly narrow hallway. The walls had cream and beige stripes with lamps on every other white stripe that emitted warm, not very bright yellow light. The ceiling was just inches from Enigma's head, with a white color that was dark gray from the shadows. The doors were the color dark brown with a brass doorknob and a mail slot. When the detective came to his door, he unlocked it and opened it to a dark room. He let Elle down off his back as he fumbled around for the

light switch. She clung to Enigma's leg as he did. "Where is it?...Ah, there it is." The room illuminated with yellow light as he clicked the switch on. Elle decided to explore the apartment as the detective closed and locked the door.

There wasn't much in the living room besides an L-shaped couch with a side table at the end with a lamp on it, a 30 inch screen TV with a tall lamp next to it. Something she noticed about the apartment was that it was pretty clean for a guy who lived on his own, not a speck of dust on the furniture or a stain in the couch or carpet.

"Now you know what I do when I'm not working or when I'm not with you and the boys. I've been cleaning the place for when you come over. It was a wreck before I met you, trust me." he explained. "I've namely been focusing on getting your room ready. I even got a proper bed for you, as you must be sick of sleeping in that little tent, and that couch isn't as good as a real bed." He said as she kept looking around. She looked around the kitchen for something. "Hungry? I don't think I have much right now. We'll go down to the store tomorrow and get you what you like." When she walked up to the fridge, she immediately opened the freezer.

"Eggos?" she asked, trying to look around in it.

"Those toaster waffles?...Let me see." He looked around the freezer for her seemingly favorite snack. As he did, she sat on the couch and pulled out this walkie-talkie that she played around with at Mike's house. Then she started to tune it. "Sorry, honey, I don't have any. We'll get a bunch of boxes tomorrow. Hey, what you got there?" Enigma walked over and sat next to her. She ignored him and kept tuning, so he just sat there and was patient with her. Next thing he knew, all of the lights in the apartment went out and she started to bleed a little out of her nose. As he got up to get her a tissue, she grabbed his coat and he sat back down. Then out of the little walkie-talkie came out a weak boy's voice...singing?

"So you gotta let me knooooooooow...Should I stay...or should I go-(click)" Then the lights came on, and Elle's eyes started to close a little. Enigma held her and carried her to her room and laid her in her bed and tucked her in with the covers, but not before wiping her nose with a tissue. She pointed at the walkie-talkie and said,

"Will..." Enigma was sitting on the bed next to her with his arm around her.

"You heard him, didn't you?" She nodded. "You're 100% sure it was him?" She nodded again. "Alright. Here's what we're gonna do. Tomorrow, after breakfast, I'll take you to Mike's house, and we'll tell him what you found out. You might have to show him yourself if he's gonna be stubborn about it. Alright?" She nodded.

"Ideal thing...to do?"

"That's right," he said, smiling and kissing her forehead. "Well, goodnight honey. Hey, you did good today. I'm very proud of you. Don't forget that. You deserve some rest in a real bed. You gonna be alright in here?" Enigma asked as he was outside the door. She nodded.

"Thanks, dad..." she said quietly, laying down.

"You're welcome, honey. See you in the morning." Enigma said, closing the door.

...

Huh...if Will isn't in the state of Indiana...then where is he? The game-board...Elle flipped it upside-down and put a wizard piece on it saying it was Will...then that he was hiding...from a monster she called the Demogorgon...I've never heard of something like that in this world. What if she meant...something else? Don't those things only exist in those weird role-playing games or whatever? However, if what she said was true, then maybe that stupid parallel universe theory was true...like Nancy's friend the other night disappeared in the blink of an eye, and I was watching it too. So then, if my guess is right, then I'm dealing with something beyond what is natural...rather something supernatural instead. No matter what, I have to keep this girl safe. Even if it means I have to break out my real...gift. Enigma thought about all of this laying in bed, he put his magnum under his pillow, in case someone came, after having locked up the apartment. He then made his hand begin to glow a very dim blue. *Only at last resort must I use it...even if it scares her.* he thought to himself as he closed his hand into a fist and stopped its glowing. He looked at his watch, and it read 12:16 AM. He took it off and rolled

over and lay awake for a while, until fatigue and exhaustion took over and caused him to pass out, his hand by his gun in case something or someone unwelcome came in and attacked Elle, or him.

14. Chapter 14: Behave yourself

...Get off of One! She did nothing wrong!...Restrain them!...I'll kill you! Let me go! She's innocent!...Fire when ready...BURN IN HELL! RRRRRRRRRRAAAAAAAGGGGHHHHH!...So that's what you do to kids, huh? What about their parents? You kill them if they resist, too?...Run, One! Run for your life! I'll get us out of here!...Dr. Brenner, sir. We have a asset breach of 001 and 002...Don't let them escape!...Get behind me!...Take care of her, please...Don't worry, young man...We'll take care of her...Thank you...One, don't forget about me, please...

"DAD!" Enigma shot up to find Elle was next to him, trying to wake him up from his nightmare. He was breathing hard with tears on his cheeks and sweat on his shirt. "...bad dream?" she asked in a shaky voice, crying a little. He looked over at her, and hugged her tightly, wiping his and her eyes.

"Yeah...just a...bad dream." he said, grateful she was there.

"...who's One?" she asked quietly. The detective's face became very grim when she asked this.

"One is...was my friend. I haven't seen her in at least 13 years, but I can still remember her. God, lord knows where she is now."

"...find her soon?" He picked her up, and carried her out of the room into the living room and set her on the couch.

"I hope so. Not sure where she'd be right now. Let's worry about that later. I'm gonna go shower, wait out here, watch some TV or something, alright? I'll be right out."

...

For breakfast, the detective took Elle to a local diner. He got a coffee with a couple over easy eggs, bacon, and toast. He gave Elle whatever she wanted, which was a bunch of waffles. He read through the paper and saw that Nancy's friend Barb was missing. *It took them THIS long to notice or to find this out? I swear, these journalists are slow as hell.* After breakfast, Enigma then used one of his "shortcuts" to

bring the both of them to Mike's house. Specifically the door to the basement to keep from being detected. He walked up to the door, Elle holding his hand, as she scared that Mike would yell at her again.

"It's alright. He should've cooled off by now." he assured as he raised his hand to the door. "If not..." she replied quietly, looking up at him. "Then he'll have to deal with me." Enigma said in response. He knocked a few times. The door opened to an agitated Mike.

"What do you want?" he said annoyed.

"Hey, watch it. Relax. No need to get tense." Enigma said as he entered the basement. "Elle, show him what you found out. Sorry, but I can't stay long, Will's mom wants to meet me at her house to discuss something. Mike, be nice and patient with Elle. She's doing what she can to help out with your friend, and so am I. Again, be patient. All good things take time, rushing it wouldn't help anything." Enigma rose up towering over Mike. "Am. I. Clear?" He said in a stern voice. Mike nodded in response. He knelt down and patted Mike on the back, smiling a little. "Good man. Elle, I'll be back at the end of the day to get you, alright?" She nodded and kissed him on the cheek.

"Bye, dad."

"Heh, bye kid. Now you behave with Mike, ok?" Enigma said. Elle nodded, smiling up at him. He smiled back, rubbed her head, and went out the door. Mike walked up to her and asked,

"You call him dad, now?" a little weirded out. She turned to him and replied,

"Yes..." quietly.

15. Chapter 15: I'll get him back

Enigma went up to the door of Joyce's house and knocked a couple times. The door opened, and Joyce sort of jump-hugged him. He hugged her back, and followed her into the house. He was bewildered at all of the Christmas lights. She opened her mouth to say something, but Enigma simply said,

"Shh...it's alright. You don't need to explain. You've been through enough already as it is."

"...My son isn't de-"

"I know, I know. He isn't dead. Not yet at least." and gently had her sit on the couch, gave her a blanket. She just sat there, surprised that someone actually believes her. The detective sighed, and pulled out a thermos from his coat pocket and gave it to her.

"What's this?" she asked, holding it up

"Just some warm milk to ease your nerves. Cheesy, I know. Relax, leave it to me. Besides, you deserve a break, Joyce." She looked at it, and after hesitating for a second, sipped it every so often. It was soothing, but it didn't stop her worrying about her lost son. The detective went around the house, examining the light-fuses of every single Christmas light. *Interesting..* He examined the walls, too. The thing that intrigued most was the "lightbulb keyboard" on the wall.

"I used that to talk to Will more easily." she explained, trying to be calm. Enigma nodded,

"That so?" He looked at the fuses of the lights very closely, and found that Joyce wasn't lying. From certain letters he could decipher words formed into messages. "What did you ask him?"

"I asked him where he was and what I had to do to get him back." she explained, drinking the milk.

"Right..."

"I'm not lying! It happened last ni-" she began standing up, only for

the detective to get her to sit back down.

"I never said you were lying. I'm just thinking about this, piecing together a picture." he said, coolly. She nodded and relaxed, or she at least tried to. The detective wrote something down, then something else.

"So he said to the first question 'RIGHTHERE' and for the second question 'RUN', is that right?" She nodded in response. "Run from what though?" he asked, curious. Her eyes widened, and she was kind of breaking down when she described the thing she ran away from.

"It was almost human, with long arms and claws and no face. It was...gray and tall. And Will told me to run away if I was going to help him..." The detective thought about this for a second. He couldn't just leave Joyce like this, not in her current state. If what she said was true, then he needed to stay. With all of the weird stuff that's been happening lately, he had no reason not to believe her.

"Tell you what, I'll stay here longer with you. I don't want you to go doing something that you'll regret. And if that thing comes back, you'll more than likely be killed by it. With me, you'll not only have someone else to prove what you say is right, but you'll have me here to defend you. If you're ok with it of course." he said, gently.

"I'll be fine on my own. Go help Hopper, don't worry about me." she was about to get up to show him to the door, but Enigma insisted that he stayed here until something came up that involved him. She reluctantly allowed him to stay for as long as necessary. He then told her that if she needed anything that he would be around the house. She nodded and gave him back the thermos,

"Thank you."

"Did it help?" he asked, taking the thermos and putting it into his coat pocket.

"A little bit."

"Good." He then went over to a recliner and laid down, extending it. It wasn't very comfortable for sleeping, but he passed out anyway and

he didn't know why. *Probably because of the damn nightmares keeping me up at night.* he deduced before falling asleep.

...

"WAKE UP! WAKE UP, I SEE WILL!" yelled Joyce, shaking the detective awake.

"What?! Huh?! Oh, where?!" he said, snapping awake.

"In the wall!" And sure enough there he was, scared as ever. The wall was something Enigma has ever seen before. Joyce had torn off some of the wallpaper, revealing some kind of window. It was like red stained glass, but it was hard to see on either side because of all of the vegetation on the other side. "Baby, honey, don't worry! Mommy's here!" she said, trying desperately to calm her panicking son down. The detective had run out to the shed for some reason, and came back charging with an axe.

"GANGWAY!" he yelled. Joyce and Will got away from the wall just in time as the detective threw a destructive blow to the red wall, which didn't do a thing to dent it. Then he began swinging the weapon at it, and even though each hit connected with the wall, the axe had seemingly no effect on the red wall.

"Mom! He's coming!" Will yelled frantically as the detective swung more and more at the wall.

"Damn IIIIIITTTTT!" Enigma yelled as he hit the wall harder and harder and faster. "Break, damn it, break!"

"Honey," Joyce said to her son, while trying to keep her composure and from bursting into tears, "don't worry, we'll find a way to get you out of there but for now, you need to run! Run and hide! We will find you, Will, honey!"

"I! Second! That!" The detective yelled as he swung more and more, eventually shooting it a few times with no effect either.

"Mom! help!"

"Don't worry, honey! I will find you! I WILL find you!" she said as the

wall seemed to close up, tears streaming down her face.

"Damn it! Why?!" The now angry detective screamed at it, stopping with the axe. He looked around the walls, and the other side of the wall, which was outside of the house. "I was so close! I was SO CLOSE to cracking the damn wall!" he screamed at seemingly nothing and no one. "Damn it, damn it, damn it, damn it, DAMN IIIIIITTTTTTTT!" The detective couldn't help but scream at the top of his lungs. He sat outside, panting and seething with rage and frustration. *I almost had him, I ALMOST HAD HIM, I ALMOST HAD HIMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM*! He thought to himself when Joyce came out and tried to get him to relax.

"Enigma! Relax! Getting upset won't help any of us!" she said sternly. At first Enigma gave her a murderous look, but as he came to his senses, he slid down until he was sitting on the porch. "Come inside." she said, ushering the detective inside. As he sat down on the couch, his frustration then came out in angry sighs and growls.

"I almost had him, Joyce. I almost had him. I almost got your son back." he said in a shaky, very restrained voice. Joyce sat next to him and wiped her tears.

"You did all that you could, and that's all that matters." she said, tearing up more.

"I swung so hard, I shot it, I gave it everything I had." He then put his head in his hands, hiding his rage, and Joyce just kind of hugged him and rubbed his back.

"Thank you for tr-trying." she said. Using a couple tissues to wipe his eyes and nose, he spat,

"Yeah yeah, no problem." with a long sigh. *She was right. Elle was right about Will.* "...don't worry about it." he added.

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"So then, if what we found is correct, then Will is in some sort of...parallel dimension. I know, it sounds like something out of The Twilight Zone, but honestly how else do you explain something like

this?" the detective said this as he sat across from Joyce at the table in the kitchen, holding her hand as she shook and smoked. "The only problem is, I don't know how to get in there. However, I will not give up on your son. I've never given up on a kid once, and I won't start now." She just nodded.

"No one will believe us, not even Jonathan."

"They'll find out the truth themselves, eventually. One way or another." the detective said, thinking to himself.

"What do you mean by that?" she asked.

"You'll see." he said, looking down at his watch. "Well, I better get going. If you need anything get Hopper over here. I have a feeling he's the first to find out the truth." As Enigma left out the door, Joyce grabbed his shoulder.

"...Take care of yourself." she told him.

"Heh, it's not me you should be worrying about. Get some rest. Lord knows you deserve it." he told her as he left. Again, she watched him leave, this time going outside on her front porch. He walked off into the woods, as fog rolled in slowly and ominously, blocking her view once again, and she listened to his footsteps crush the twigs on the ground until they could no longer be heard.

16. Chapter 16: Respect for Young love

The detective waited in the woods behind Mike's house. *Where are they?...Good, they're here.* he thought when he saw the boys come and go inside, but then got worried when he saw Elle. She looked drained and tired, with blood coming out of her nose. *What happened?* As they went in, carrying Elle in, and closed the door, the detective sprang up and walked to the door. He knocked gently,

"Elle? Mike?" he called. Mike opened the door,

"Oh, uh, hi Enigma."

"What's goin on kid? Why do you look so scared?" He saw Elle and understood.

"Tell me what happened. Don't worry guys, I'm not angry." Enigma sat down and rested Elle's head on his lap, with a confused look on his face. "What did you do to her?" he asked in a joking voice.

They told him about how Elle showed them that she could find people with Mike's radio, how they gave her a full makeover - Mike blushed slightly at that - and brought her into school. The reason behind this is that the radio didn't have a very strong signal, so there was a set of broadcasting equipment that apparently had a signal strong enough to reach Australia according to the leader of the AV club, Mr. Clarke. They said that after a few seconds, the lights turned off and that they could hear Will talking, and that they could hear something crashing repeatedly and a woman's voice. *They could hear Joyce and I.* After a few minutes, the AV equipment exploded and melted, along with Elle passing out shortly after. Thankfully, Dustin was quick to put out the fire with the fire extinguisher in the room, and they got out of there as fast as they could.

"You shoulda seen me with that fire extinguisher! I was all like FWOOOSH FWOOOOOOOSH! That fire didn't stand a chance against me! Johnny Blaze would be scared!" Dustin exclaimed comically, making noises and making gestures and heroic poses. The detective chuckled at this, amazed how at least one of them could laugh during something like this.

"I say, whoever did the make-up did a decent job," the detective observed as he looked at Elle's sleeping face, "did your sister do this, Mike? Or did you do it yourself?" While it seemed like a simple question, something the detective was able to do very well was he was able to get things out of people through the art of asking questions in a dense tone, making him seem oblivious when really he either REALLY wanted information that you had or he just wanted to embarrass you. Mike just kind of stammered,

"Uhhh, my sister wasn't, uh, home, and I uh, didn't want anyone else to find out, so y-y-yeah, I did it myself." he admitted, blushing more. "I didn't think we'd do this good of a job making her look prett-GOOD."

"Ah, so you like her then, don't you? I can tell from the look on your face and the blushing. Also the dress you picked for her." the detective said, with a sly look on his face. While he did give Mike a sly look, he really deeply respected when a guy liked a girl and vice versa. Even if he didn't fully understand the concept of love, he accepted that it was natural. That's why the instant Lucas and Dustin started laughing, he shot an angry look at them, shutting them up.

"I think it's about time you boys went home. I want to discuss something with Mike alone if you don't mind. Wouldn't want your mothers at your necks would you?" They shook their heads.

"Later, Mike. Bye, sir." They both said as they went out the door, Mike waving after them.

"See you tomorrow, gentlemen." the detective replied. Mike just covered his face. "Don't worry, bucko, you're not in trouble, and I'm not mad. Just wanted to discuss crushes with you." The real reason he wanted to talk with Mike is because he knew Elle was awake, and he figured that it was time she knew. "It's natural for a guy your age to start crushing on a girl her age. I'm just messing with you, and I'm sure you've heard this a million times. In reality, I respect all crushes, as long as they are true and not deceitful, like the one between your sister and the Harrington idiot. Honestly, she's better off with Jonathan if anyone. At least he's got some decency." the detective said, patting Mike on the shoulder. Then he felt a tug on his shirt, as Elle had been awake for seemingly the whole time.

"...Crush?" she asked, yawning and stretching. Mike just sort of tensed up and blushed immensely to the point where his face was red as ever.

"REALLY?! You wanted the guys to go home just to EMBARASS ME?!" he yelled at the laughing detective.

"Not at all, Mike. I just wanted to teach her as well, as I think that it's time she knew, too. It's not hard for me to know that you like her." Elle sat up and rested her head on the detective's chest waving at Mike, smiling. He nervously waved back.

"See? I can tell just by the way you looked at her just now and how you waved. Also when you kept looking at her in her sleep." Mike blushed more furiously than ever.

"Sh-Shut up!" Mike replied, covering his face due to the immense redness.

"Alright, alright I'll stop. Geez, you gotta throw a hissy-fit about it?" the detective said after laughing a little, then he thought for a minute. "Let's see, what time is it? 3:30? What day is it? Friday or Saturday? Why the hell not? Hey Mike, wanna join us for a little bit?" Elle's face lit up at the idea.

"What so you can embarrass me more? No!" Mike replied defensively, as Elle then frowned. She then got up saying,

"Friends don't leave each other behind."

"Yeah, sure, but he's just trying to embarrass me more! This is all a trick! Come on, Elle! How can you not see-" he was cut off when she grabbed his hand, causing him to tense up and blush intensely, sighing in submission.

"I'll take that as a yes, then?" the detective asked. Elle smiled and nodded, and Mike hid his face. "Alright, grab your shoes and coat and let's go."

"But my parents-" Mike started.

"First thing to do is we stop by my place and you call your mother

saying you're at a friend's house. If she needs to talk to a parent, give me the phone and I'll talk to her. No big deal. By the way, you look cute, honey." the detective said smiling and winking at her. Elle smiled, blushing slightly. This felt...weird to Mike. Even though Elle called the detective "dad", it still felt like he was going out with a total stranger. "Hey slowpoke, you comin' or not?" the detective called out to him.

"Yeah, I'm coming." he replied back.

17. Chapter 17: A Nice Day Out

After the three got into town, they first called Mike's mom with a pay phone to inform him as to where he was, and she ended up talking with Enigma. Being that today was Friday, Karen Wheeler, the mother, wanted him home around 10:00 in the evening.

"Alright, that gives us a few hours. Come on, let's go do stuff." the detective said as he walked with the two kids. He took the kids to the theater to see what was on. "How about...Star Wars? You seem to be a guy who's into Sci-Fi, Mike. How about it?"

"Return of the Jedi? I've already seen it, but I'll watch it again. Besides, ANYONE who's a Star wars fan knows that the fifth one is the best."

The detective smirked. *A Sci-Fi fan, eh? Heh, ok. How about...* "E.T.?" Elle just kind of listened as they talked about something she didn't even understand.

"That kids movie? No! I heard that was a dumb movie, anyways." Mike said, disgusted.

"Oh, please. Have you even seen it?" the detective asked.

"...No."

"Then don't judge something if you haven't even seen it yet. That's like saying Star Wars sucks because it looks stupid, or people won't shut up about it." the detective said, teasing Mike.

"Shut up." he said, shoving the detective, who just laughed in response. Elle, seeing this as an offense, glared at Mike.

"Alright, tough guy. Three for E.T. please. Thank you. Alright guys let's g-Elle, what's wrong?" said the detective as she glared angrily at Mike.

"...Hit you." she replied as she stared down Mike, who looked progressively more scared.

"Hey, relax. It's a way of playing around. It's like if I do this." the detective explained as he fake punched Mike in the shoulder.

"Y-yeah, it's a way showing that you're friends with someone, weirdly enough." Mike added, as Elle relaxed, now understanding. She then proceeded to punch Mike in the shoulder.

"Alright, let's go inside before we beat each other up." the detective said as he ushered the kids in.

When they got in the theater, Enigma took them to the snack line. "You guys want candy or popcorn?"

"Candy...Popcorn...?" Elle asked quietly.

"Yeah, movie snacks. You'll like it, trust me. Won't she, Mike?" The detective said, rubbing her head, minding the wig.

"Yeah, Elle! Stuff is delicious!" Mike exclaimed. So they ended up getting a large popcorn, a large Sprite, a small Coke, and some fruit punch for Elle, as Enigma didn't know how she would react to the fizz in soda.

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It was about 5:30 PM when they were finished with the movie. Enigma was teasing Mike outside for the bathroom waiting for Elle, as she had pretty much eaten a little more than half of the popcorn.

"You liked it. Come on, admit it." teased the detective.

"Fine, it was ok, I guess." Mike retorted.

"You were on the edge of your seat for the whole movie. Come on, you're not kidding anybody." the detective said with a smug smile as Mike punched him. "And don't think I didn't catch you holding Elle's hand, lover boy."

"DUDE!" Mike whispered loudly, blushing intensely, "don't say that out loud! I don't need more people looking at me!"

"Ok, ok relax, I'll stop, I'll stop. You know what I said about crushes,

right?"

"Yeah."

"So relax, why do you think I shot your friends a nasty look when they laughed?" the detective said as Elle came out of the bathroom with wet, kind of soapy hands. "Hey, kiddo. No paper towels, eh?" She shook her head. "Go figure. Just go use the hand dryers." She gave him a scared look. "Alright, you know what? Wipe your hands on your jacket." he said, pointing at her jacket. She looked at him uncomfortably, as if to say "It'll get wet." "It's alright, it's just water. It'll dry off in the air." he said. She nodded and wiped her hands off on her jacket until they were dry. "Ok, you two, what do you want for dinner?" the detective asked as they went outside.

"Burgers." Elle piped up, pointing at a nearby restaurant.

"Huh, looks good. Alright, what about you Mike? You good with burgers?"

"Sure." Mike replied.

"Alright, let's go then." the detective said as he walked over to the burger place, Mike and Elle following close behind. All of a sudden, he heard a low, dumb voice. He turned to see a black, curly-haired boy with a taller kid with shorter, flat hair, bullying Mike and Elle.

"What's up, frogface? Going out with your girlfriend?" said the black, curly-haired boy.

18. Chapter 18: Big, Bad Troy

"Shut up, Troy. Leave us alone. Hey, let go of her!" Mike yelled as the other guy grabbed her by the arm. *Another Troy?* Then Troy grabbed Mike by the collar and yanked him closer.

"Why? Maybe she'd want to go out with me instead of a loser like you. Not with that black eye, and that scratched chin."

"What black eye? I don't have a black eye!" Mike retorted.

"Heh heh, now you do." Troy said as he reeled his fist back to punch him when a strong arm grabbed his arm and lifted him upward effortlessly, "Wha-?" he said as Mike smacked his hand away. Troy's friend was distracted long enough for Elle to pull away from his grip, then using her powers to fling him a little ways back, looking down at him angrily as he scuttled away. "H-hey get over here and help me!" Troy commanded his friend, but he just ran off like the cowardly bully that he is. Then Troy looked into the terrifying, angry, glowing eyes of the detective. He squirmed trying to get away, even trying to punch the detective, with no effect. "L-l-let me go! I won't go near them again! I swear!" he said frantically, as his legs dangled in the air. All he got was a tightening grip and a growl in response.

"Enigma, stop! He's not worth our time." Mike said, sounding reasonable. The detective looked at him, and back at Troy, and back at him, and back at Troy. *He just attacked them, I will destroy him! On the other hand, Mike does have a point; this ignoramus IS a waste of time. OUR time.* He then felt a small tug on his coat, and he looked down at Elle who got immediately scared at the sight of his expression, but she hugged him.

"Dad...let mouth-breather...go." he heard her say. He then progressively began to calm down. Then he looked at Troy.

"If I see you and your friend anywhere near these kids again," the detective said angrily as he picked up an empty soda can. He then crushed it in his bare hand. Hard, to the point where it was a thin piece of metal. "Get the picture?" he said looking at the scared kid, dropping the can. He nodded frantically. The detective dropped him

and watched him run off, screaming. "Hmph. Coward." He then exhaled, calming down, and picking up Elle, hugging her. "Thanks, guys. For helping me come to my senses. Sorry if I scared you, honey. I just didn't like the way they treated you and Mike." he said, tussling his hair.

"I deal with those guys everyday. If anything, I should be thanking you. Now that they know who's helping us, no way are they going to bother us again." Mike replied.

"Heh, no problem kid. Alright," the detective said, wiping Elle's nose, "let's get some dinner."

19. Chapter 19: First Kiss

After the encounter with Troy and his crony, Enigma treated Elle and Mike to whatever they wanted at the barbecue restaurant. Elle got two cheeseburgers with ketchup and lettuce, as well as a basket of curly fries. Mike got pretty much the same thing, with onions, lettuce, ketchup, mayo and mustard as well. Enigma got a massive rack of ribs because he'd forgotten to eat lunch. Needless to say, they ate everything, and they stared at the detective in amazement when he basically inhaled the entire rack.

"Hey, never let good food go to waste, but also don't force yourself. NEVER force yourself. I've done that, mmmmaybe, three to five hundred times in my life. Needless to say, neither of them ended well." he said when he was done. Mike laughed and Elle giggled at this, as they held hands. The detective knew this, and he respected this.

After paying the bill for the food, he took them to an arcade, and let them play games for a while. Whenever he played a game with Mike, and he lost, Enigma would get comically mad on purpose, to make Mike to laugh his ass off. Whenever he lost to Elle, he did it on purpose and would say something encouraging, like "Ah! Got me again! Nice job, bucko." and rub her back, smiling, and she'd smile back. They then went and got ice cream after an hour of games. Enigma got chocolate, Elle got strawberry, and Mike got cake batter. He then took Mike to a shop and told Elle to wait outside.

"It's a surprise." he told her. Although confused, she waited outside anyway. When they came out, Enigma was holding a stuffed bear and a little box...and Elle had moved. Enigma looked around for her and spotted her at a pavilion under the stars, sitting at a bench, looking at them. As the detective and Mike made their way down to the pavilion, Mike got nervous.

"What's the matter, Mike?" the detective asked as he saw Mike with a worried look on his face.

"Wh-what if she doesn't like them? What if I creep her out? What if-what if she doesn't like me?" Mike asked these things as he trembled

on the way to the pavilion, worried about being rejected. *Ah yes, fear of rejection. How...understandable.* thought the detective.

"Mike, she won't reject you. You know, she asked me something as I was going to drop her off at your house earlier today."

"Yeah? And what'd she ask?"

"She asked about why she got a stomach ache whenever she's around you."

Mike's stomach tossed and turned as his fear had turned in to curiosity. "Then what?"

"I told her that it was natural and that she wasn't sick. I then said that I would further explain in the afternoon, as I had to leave immediately after I dropped her off."

"S-s-so that means that..."

"Why don't you go ask her yourself, Mike? Don't ask me. Give these to her as gifts, and you do the rest."

"O-ok." Mike said, nervously and taking the gifts. *I hope she likes these, I don't want to disappoint her.* he thought to himself. He turned around to see Enigma giving him the thumbs-up.

"Hey Elle." he said, trying not to blush and sound as confident as he could while sitting down next her.

"...Hi Mike." she said, smiling and taking hold of his hand. Mike tensed up, but relaxed. *Her hands are so soft, and her eyes practically sparkled like the stars,* he thought as they locked eyes for a few seconds before Elle broke it, blushing pink. Then she pointed at the stars. "Pretty." she said, admiring them as they twinkled in the night sky. Mike couldn't help but stare at Elle and admire how the stars and moonlight made her look more beautiful than during the day, when the sun shined on her hair and made her kind of glow in the sunlight. The minute Elle looked at him he looked down at his feet, blushing hard.

"I, uh, got you something when I was with Enig- I mean, your dad."

he said as he showed her the stuffed bear. She instantly hugged it, smiling. "And I got you something else." He then pulled out the small box and gave it to her. She opened it to find a small heart locket. "Open it." he said, as she then opened the small piece of jewelry to find that it was empty. She looked at him confused. "You put in pictures of the people you...care about most, and wear it around your neck." She then looked up at him and pointed at him saying,

"...Care about you and dad most." while blushing a little. Mike began to blush again, as he didn't know what to say to that.

"Elle, I-" he said turning to Elle, but he was cut off by her kissing him on the lips. It was quick but soft, and it was enough to make Mike as red and tense as ever. She then leaned her head on his shoulder, blushing hot pink. In that brief moment, Mike was panicking as he didn't know what to do. Before he could freak out anymore, a strong hand gently moved his arm by the sleeve around her shoulder. He quickly looked up to see the detective, with his finger over his mouth. Calming down, he brought Elle closer, as that was what he thought he was supposed to do. The detective nodded and smiled at him.

"...crush." Mike heard Elle say, pointing at him.

"Uhhh, yeah. Crush." he replied back, pointing at her. It took all the detective's concentration not to freak out about this, as he was so happy to see this in person. *Adorable*, was the only thought he had. Not long after, Mike and Elle fell asleep in each other's arms. As Enigma gently picked them up in his arms, smiling. *Nice job, kid. You did good.* he thought to himself as he laid Mike in his bed, as he was at Mike's house. He put a slip on his bedside table that had Enigma's number on it. "Call me if you need anything pal." it also read. He left as soon as he heard the mother call his name, "Mike?".

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He laid Elle into her bed back home with her hugging her bear and laid her locket on her bedside table. He thought about taking off the wig, but decided to leave it. He did take off the dress and jacket, wiped the makeup off of her face, and put her into her pajamas. *You've had quite the night, huh? Heh. Glad you had a great time, honey.*

he thought as he kissed her forehead, tucked her in, and took out a framed picture from earlier today. They'd gone to get their picture taken. Enigma was kneeling and had his arms around the two kids, flashing a smile while winking. Mike waved at the camera with a big smile on his face. Elle gave a small smile while holding Mike's hand. The detective looked at the picture and smiled at it. Giving a relaxed sigh, he put the picture on her bedside table, quietly went to his room, and went to sleep.

20. Chapter 20: Why did you stop looking?

One? One is...is that you?! I...I thought I lost you forever!...Don't come near me...What? Why? I've been looking for you!...You left me at that hospital, Two...Because I thought they could help you!...No, you betrayed me...I never betrayed you! I waited there for days in that same room until they took you away into a strange room with big metal doors, and they told me I couldn't go where you were going!...You didn't stay with me, what makes you think she will?...Hey, don't bring Elle into this! This has nothing to do with her!...If it has nothing to do with her, then why aren't you looking for me...

"Dad." The detective snapped awake at the voice. He looked up to see Elle sitting on the foot of his bed with an egg in either hand. "...bad dream?" she asked, handing him a waffle. He looked at it, and back at her. Sighing, smiling, he replied,

"Yeah, just a...bad dream. Thanks honey, but it's ok. You take it." he said, politely denying the waffle. The blankets and pillows were in a great disarray from his tossing and turning from last night. They yet again were drenched in sweat, as were his pajamas. He got up and walked into the kitchen to make some coffee. He saw Elle sitting down in one of the island chairs munching on her waffles, glad that one of them got some restful sleep. He looked in the bathroom mirror, and saw that the dark circles under his eyes had sagged lower. *Damn, sleep is getting harder and harder with these painful flashbacks and worsening nightmares. I can't stop thinking about One. God, I miss her. I can't believe I left her at that hospital, so...vulnerable and-and unprotected. How could I? Who knows where she is now? Maybe she's safe and I just don't know it, or she got captured again and they're treating her worse than all of those years before.* As the exhausted detective started to breakdown into tears, he slid down and curled up into a ball. His hands were on his head as the guilt, grief, and fear built up, more and more. Tears began streaming down his face as he was overwhelmed with these emotions. Pictures of One appeared in his head, full of experiments, abuse, hatred, and the interrogation done to her. *One...I-I...am sorry...I'm a failure and I failed to protect you, to be there for you, and this girl, Elle. If I lose her I...don't know what I'd do with myself.* thought the despairing detective. His eyes were wide

with fear and guilt and sorrow, and his face was frozen with an expression of grief as pictures of Elle getting the same treatment as he ran a cold sweat. It felt like the world was closing in around him, like no one cared about him. He then felt arms close around him, weeping silently. He looked down to see Elle, hugging him.

"Dad...no more crying." she said, shakily as she was tearing up herself, scared that she'd lost him, wiping his face with a tissue. The detective hugged her, crying full force with sobs.

"I...I can't...I can't...I can't lose you...I can't lose you the way I lost *her*, Elle." he forced out in between sobs. "Not the way I lost One."

"...I care about you most, dad." she said, kissing his cheek and hugging him, tears forming. Calming down and wiping his face, he hugged her back and smiled.

"I love you too, honey."

21. Chapter 21: What Hopper Found out

After Enigma showered off and got dressed, he dropped off Elle along with her locket at Mike's house. After waving goodbye, Enigma went to Hopper's house. He'd gotten a phone call from him about some major breakthrough. With no further information, the detective headed straight for the chief's house. He knocked on the door.

"Jim?" he said. The door opened with Hopper swinging the door opened with his gun cocked aiming right for Enigma. "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Relax, Jim. It's just me." The detective then put his hands up slowly.

"Hey, Enigma. Sorry I, had to be ready in case one of those government bastards was knocking on my door." he said coolly, putting his gun down. "Come in, come in." When the detective came in the house, he saw that the place was in shambles. Ripped pillows, unscrewed lamps, a shabbily repaired phone that Hopper had used. The detective observed all of this and took it all in, thinking about who or what could possibly have done this. None of the windows were broken, the front and back door was in good condition. He then looked at Hopper. Something he noticed right off the bat was that there was something on his neck. He went up to Hopper and looked at the left side of his neck, and he saw a small place where someone had pierced it with a needle of some kind.

"You were looking for something somewhere you weren't supposed to. Hawkins Lab?" the detective asked, walking away, observing the floor.

"Yeah. Bastards got and tranquilized me. Will's not dead by the way, I was at the crematorium and found a stuffed replica of him." Hopper explained, sitting down. Enigma nodded in response. "Also, are you ok? You look...terrible."

"Yeah, I'm...I'm fine. Let me see your hands." he asked Hopper, who hesitantly gave Enigma his hands. He looked at them closely. "Thanks." he then said, letting the chief's hands go. After a little bit of looking, he noticed something about the ceiling lamp in the middle of the room. He looked closer to find some wiring in there that normally

shouldn't be. "Did you find something in here, Jim?"

"Yeah as a matter a fact I did. Catch." Hopper then tossed Enigma a little device, who caught it without looking back at him. He then looked down at it, inspecting it. "And are you sure you're ok? Cause I look at you, and every day you look more and more like hell. Maybe you should take today off or something," he put his hand on the detective's shoulder, "to rest."

"I said I'm fine!" the detective yelled, hitting Hopper's hand away, looking very angry at him. Hopper stepped back, as if to say "Relax." The detective sighed and calmed down. "I'm sorry, Jim. I didn't mean to get angry. This case just has gotten me on edge. I get nightmares of all of this, everything we've worked for, and how it all goes to shit." he explained as he looked down, guiltily. Hopper put his hand back on the detective's shoulder. He then understood that sleep probably didn't come so easily for the detective.

"Hey, Enigma, don't sweat it. By the way, it's a microphone. They must've been able to have heard everything through their tap lines. For all we know, there could be one at Joyce's. I'm gonna head over there." Hopper said, grabbing his coat, hat, keys, gun, and threw his shoes on. "Oh and another thing, there's something going on at Hawkins Lab. When I was there, I noticed some...weird fungus-hole thing. It was all quarantined, and closed off." he said as he was getting ready to leave. *The Upside Down. That must be the main gateway into that dimension.* Just as the chief was about to head out the door, the detective grabbed his shoulder.

"Be careful, Jim. You know that I don't want to lose anyone else. There's two kids missing already, and I don't want to lose a friend as it is." he said solemnly, letting go. The chief nodded, got into his truck, and drove off to Joyce's house.

22. Chapter 22: Do I have actual friends?

Enigma walked, or rather dragged himself around, in the woods, trying to relax from everything that was going on. Normally when he walked through this place, there was lush green grass on the ground, green leaves on the trees that became a more vibrant color when the sun shone on them. He would feel rejuvenated when he came out of the peaceful place, at peace with himself. However, it wasn't the same around this time of year. *Why?...Why is there so much...death around me? I came here seeking tranquility, not more anxiety.* he thought to himself as he looked around. While in the Spring and Summer where there would be new life and bright colors around him, this time of year caused everything to look lifeless and dead. The detective wasn't walking on green grass, but rather dead leaves and twigs. He wasn't walking under green leaved trees, but tall dead branches that grew out of the earth with no color or looking as if they were alive. All of the birds, rabbits, and squirrels that he would normally see were in their homes hibernating or flying south. These woods in Autumn didn't do anything to relieve the detective of his edge, but rather sharpen it. It made the place feel forbidden, like something would jump out and attack him. His exhaustion only made it hard to see straight, as well as walk as fast as he normally would. He would occasionally stumble only to catch himself, as every fiber in his body wanted to rest, but he forced it to keep going. It also stressed him out more, as he couldn't find the source of his tranquility. He then heard gunshots in the distance, so he slowly followed them. Eventually, he came to find Jonathan, who was shooting cans off of some logs with Nancy. The detective stumbled down to the two teenagers, calling out,

"Hey...Jona...Jona..than..." and, "...Nan...Nancy...uuuggghhhhh..." and as they turned to wave back, he collapsed to the ground out of exhaustion. As he slowly raised his head and opened his eyes, he could see two figures dashing toward him. As he struggled to stay awake, he could make out the figures of Nancy and Jonathan carrying him by either of his shoulders. They then gently propped him up against a tree. Then they sat with him, Nancy on his right and Jonathan on his left.

"What...what're...what're you doing?" he said slowly, slurring his words from exhaustion and looking at them.

"You've helped us out a lot. Now let us help you." Nancy said, buttoning up his coat.

"I...I've done nothing for you...guys." the detective said, trying hard as he could to stay awake. He felt like he didn't deserve this, he just wanted to be alone.

"Sure you have. You helped me when Steve was about to break my windshield, and if he had my bag, he would have ripped up the photos and broke my camera." Jonathan said.

"And you helped me realize that hooking up with Steve was one of the worst mistakes I've ever made." Nancy added.

"Wow...th..thanks guys. I...I appreciate it." the detective said.

"You're welcome." Nancy said, side-hugging him. "You're our friend after all."

The detective thought about this for a second. *I'm their...friend? But I've never helped anybody. I'm just a big doofus doing what I think is the best course of action.* He thought about himself. He looked at the two teenagers and thought for a second. Then he had an idea.

"Friends...help each...each other out, right? They...care about...each other, right?" he asked, holding their hands. They nodded in response. Then the detective took their hands and interlocked them. Pointing at them both, he said, "You two...are perfect...for each other." he said, gently closing his hands around their bonded ones. The two then looked at each other. Jonathan fidgeted and nervously looked away, while Nancy blushed, taking hold of his hand, as he then took hold of hers in response, still looking away out of embarrassment. Then, not being about to stay awake any longer, the detective fell into a deep sleep, one that he so much deserved.

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"...hmmmmmmmmmmmm?" the detective woke up in the back of a car, presumably Jonathan's, as he recognized the interior. His head

rested on some kind of pillow and he was covered by a thick blanket. *No nightmares? Usually, I get them shortly after I fall asleep, but none during this long nap? How can this be?* The detective thought about this for a while, then he remembered that he fell asleep around Jonathan and Nancy. *Those two, they helped me rest, and they helped me get comfortable. Is it because they...care about me? Because I'm their...friend? But if so, who'd want to be friends with me?* He then began to recollect about how the people he's met treated him when he helped them.

He had flashbacks of when he first met Eleven, how they bonded over chess, when she first called him "dad", and how she deeply cared about him, like this morning when she comforted him when he had that breakdown in the bathroom. He remembered yesterday when he took Mike and Elle out to have fun, and how he met the other Troy and how he would have severely hurt him if Mike and Elle hadn't intervened and convinced him to just let go of his rage. He remembered how he gave Mike those gifts and the confidence to tell Elle how he really felt about her, and in turn, Mike sort of taught Elle what it meant to care about others.

He remembered when he helped Joyce pay for the phone at the store, and how he revealed to her what really happened that fateful night involving Will, and how he did his damndest to get her son out of that red wall, and how she assured him that he did what he could when he cried out of frustration.

He recalled when he helped out Jonathan by putting Steve and his friends in their place, and keeping the camera and photos safe, and when he came to Nancy and advised her to stay away from Steve and to think about what really mattered about a person, and that he put her and Jonathan on good terms in that park nearby the cemetery. In return, they got him as comfortable as he could be for him to sleep peacefully when they saw that he was truly exhausted from everything that's been going on.

Even Hopper, the chief of the police, tried to help him when he heard about the detective's nightmares and fears of failure and loss of his friends and more people. *All of these people, these wonderful, caring people. They're so...nice to me. They came to me and helped me when I needed them the most, and when I helped them.* He could then feel a warm feeling inside of him. It was similar to when Elle first called

him "dad", and it spread throughout his body. *Is this...what it feels like to be...happy? Is this what true happiness is?* he thought to himself, as he got out of the car, shutting the door, thinking hard about this. *I get those nightmares because I feel alone, and even with Elle in the apartment I felt alone. But this time, when I fell asleep, I didn't feel alone. I was with my...friends. Not just my allies, but my friends, the people who care about me. They CARE about me, they care that I exist. And I care about them too, because to me, they're my friends, they're like...my family...to me.* Just then the detective heard a loud gasp. Nancy. The newly rejuvenated detective immediately took action, and tree-jumped in the direction of the gasp, faster than he'd ever gone before. *Don't worry, guys. I'm on my way.*

23. Chapter 23: Saving Nancy

Enigma jumped from branch to branch as fast as he could, as he HAD to get to Jonathan and Nancy. *Why didn't they wake me up? Who knows what kind of danger they're in.* he thought with sincere urgency. He was going so fast that he was almost gliding with each tremendous leap. He could hear their footsteps as he got closer. He then leaped off of the next branch toward the ground with his feet out, and as he landed, he slid along the ground, using his heels to slow himself down. As soon as he stopped, he made his eyes glow so he could see better. *It's bad enough that everything here pretty much has the word depression written everywhere, but it's even worse at night.* he thought to himself as he looked at the woods around him. During the night, the woods in the Spring and Summer always seemed like an enchanted place, with the fireflies lighting up the space and the plant-life glistening in the moonlight. The Winter always made it seem like some kind of wonderland of sorts. *I'm sure Mike would take Elle here in that time of year...unintentional rhyme.*

In the Fall, however, the place seemed eerie and full of darkness. The detective always felt surrounded, like he was being watched in this time of day and year. Just to be sure, he pulled out his magnum, ready to blow away whatever jumped out at him. *Perfect, a full clip and a few extras.* He heard footsteps behind him, and when he turned he found the two appeared to be following something in the woods. *There they are, and they're somewhat safe.* The detective sighed in relief as he walked over to them, but he still had his weapon drawn, in case something jumped out of no where. He then approached them as slow as he could to avoid scaring them, watching his every step to make sure he didn't step on anything that might cause a loud noise, and dimming his lights to avoid detection. As he was following them, he noticed what looked like a smeared blood trail on the ground. *Is this what they were following?* Enigma tightened his grip around his gun and cocked the trigger as he followed the trail.

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After a short following of the trail, he heard a small scream, which made his blood run cold. *Nancy.* The detective then ran to their

location as fast as he possibly could. He could hear Jonathan yelling "Nancy! Nancy!" getting closer and closer. *Almost there*. He then slid to a full stop, passing Jonathan and brightening his eyes a little. "Jonathan, are you alright? Where's Nancy?" Enigma asked, walking toward him and dusting himself off.

"I'm fine an- wait, is that a headlamp?" Jonathan replied pointing at the detective's eyes.

"No, and I'll explain later. Where did Nancy go? I heard a scream and you yelling for her."

"I-I don't know. One minute she was inspecting that tree, next minute she was gone." he replied, pointing at a tree. The trail of blood had let right to its roots.

"Hmmm..." the detective walked over to the tree and bent down to inspect it. As he brightened his lights, he then noticed some kind of rabbit hole. Only it wasn't a rabbit hole; rabbit holes aren't covered in slime and fungus, nor do they look...mossy. "Good work, Jonathan. I know where she is." he commended the teenager for pointing him in the right direction. He then began crawling through the hole, but Jonathan grabbed his ankle, stopping him.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa, where are you going?" he said to the detective, worriedly.

"To get your girlfriend, of course." he said in a snarky tone. Jonathan just fidgeted and blushed a little.

"Sh-shut up." he retorted.

"Relax, I'm messing with you. Alright, when you see Nancy's hand, yank her as hard as you can. I'll follow if possible."

"Are you kidd-"

"Do you trust me?"

"...I guess."

"Then I'll be back with your girlfriend shortly," but quietly the

detective added, "I hope," as he crawled through the hole.

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If there's one thing the detective knew, it was that this place was going to be exceedingly more dangerous than any other nation he's gone to. *Alright, help Nancy, get her outside, and follow close behind. It's alright, Enigma. Nice and quick. Have to be quiet though, that monster Elle was talking about could be prowling around.* Soon, the detective had crawled out of the hole, and was now in the desolate Upside Down. Right away, he found Nancy, staring at something walking backwards, trembling with fear. "Nancy!" he whispered. She quickly turned and noticed him with his finger over his mouth. "Shhhhhh..." Then looking around, he then motioned her to come over, slowly. Watching her every step, Nancy made her way over to the detective, who had his gun out. It was at this moment that he noticed the Demogorgon, but that wasn't important right now. Then he saw her step on a twig, making a loud cracking noise, and instantly the monster turned around from its freshly caught prey, emitting a loud roar. "NANCY! GET THROUGH THE HOLE! QUICKLY!" the detective yelled, pointing at the hole. She froze at the sight of the monster charging at them, but then scrambled to get in the hole.

"WHAT ABOUT YOU?!" She yelled before she left that desolate place.

"Don't worry about me! I've got some hunting to do." he said turning to face the monster. He planted his feet in the ground, ready for its attack. As soon as it swung its massive arm at him, he grabbed it with one hand, and using its momentum, threw it a ways away. He then shot it in one of the legs, causing it to scream in pain and struggle to get up. The detective then used this to get out of that place, but just as he got to the other side, the monster grabbed him by the leg, trying to pull him back into its world. *Damn, this thing is FAST!* In response, he kicked it hard in the face, breaking loose of its grasp and scrambled out of there. Nancy and Jonathan helped him up, but he said, "I'm alright guys, I'm alright. I'm fine. I'm more concerned about you. Are you alright, Nancy?" he then asked her. She nodded, but she was shaking, eyes wide with fear. She and the detective were covered in the slime, fungus, and dirt from the hole. The detective sighed in relief as he saw the hole close up.

24. Chapter 24: What's the matter, Elle?

Jonathan took Nancy back to her house and they went up to her room. No words were exchanged on the way there, or when they got there. Enigma went off back into the woods to find Elle, as Mike mentioned something about going someplace to find Will using compasses. He then sat down and concentrated, feeling for her..."signature". *Elle? Elle, where are you honey? Please God, I hope you're ok.* Eventually, he found it, and used a shortcut in the trees to get to her faster. He was horrified to see her lying on the ground, without her wig, and a little blood drying underneath her nostril, as well as blood on her jacket sleeve. He shook her, "Elle? Honey, come on wake up." She snapped awake at his voice and hugged him, crying a little. She didn't care about his filth as he hugged her back. "Shhhh...it's ok, you don't have to talk about it if you don't want to." he told her as she got ready to explain herself. He picked her up, and took her home. He showered off, threw their clothes in the wash, got Elle in her pajamas, got into his pajamas, and prepared something, as he was going to take Elle over to Nancy's. "...dad?" she yawned as he filled the carfare with water and began to heat it up. "...going somewhere?"

"Yes, we're going somewhere. Do you have your bear?" he said, calmly, with his hand on her shoulder.

"Yes." she said, holding it up.

"Alright, good." he said as he gave her a pair of comfortable slippers for herself. The water began to boil and when it was ready, he took out a tray, a little bowl, a small pitcher, four small mugs, and a tea pot. He put a bag of tea leaves in the pot and poured the hot water into it, mixing the leaves and water. He poured sugar in to the little dish with a teaspoon, and poured milk into the pitcher. He took the tea bag out of the pot and put the top on, turning off the coffee maker and dumping out the carfare. He put everything else on the tray including a box of butter cookies and some juice boxes for Elle. He grabbed his long bath robe, put on his slippers, and picked up the tray, balancing it carefully while heading out the door with Elle locking it behind them. Using a shortcut, Enigma and Elle walked

into the kitchen of the Wheelers' residence through the living room closet. Enigma set down the tray, and he and Elle headed upstairs to Nancy's room quietly. He then knocked on her door gently, "Nancy?" he said quietly. Jonathan opened the door with Nancy behind him to find Enigma with his hands on the shoulders of a little girl. "Hey guys. Come downstairs, I uh, brought tea. And there's someone I'd like you to meet."

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Enigma poured the three of them tea and gave Elle the juice boxes, in case she didn't like tea or it was too hot for her. Nancy was in Jonathan's arms and wrapped in a blanket, sipping her tea every now and then, adding some sugar and milk to it. Jonathan took his black with some sugar. Elle was snuggling in Enigma's bathrobe and munching on some cookies. The bathrobe was comfortable and fluffy, believe it or not, and the cookies weren't that bad. Enigma looked at Nancy and couldn't help but feel bad for her. *No one, not even Nancy, should've seen or experience that horrible place. It's bad enough that Elle has.* He held her hand, and stroked it with his thumb.

"I...We will stay as long as you'd like us too." he said reassuringly, putting his arm around Elle and hugging her close.

"Thank you. Thank you so much." was all she said. After a pause, she broke the silence. "Who is this, by the way?" she then asked, pointing at Elle, who looked up at Nancy.

"This is Elle, and I'm looking after her." he replied. "Elle, this is Nancy and that's Jonathan. They're friends of...dad." Jonathan smiled and waved.

"Hi." she piped up nervously. She then pointed at the detective and said, "That's my dad." At this, Nancy couldn't help but feel her heart melt.

"Aww, she thinks you're her dad," Jonathan kind of shifted when she said this, "that's so sweet. I'm Mike's sister by the way." Nancy said, holding out her hand to Elle. Elle, remembering what Benny taught her, shook her hand, and looked down at hearing Mike's name.

"Her and Mike are-" Elle put her hand over Enigma's mouth, who chuckled in response. "Well," he said, putting her hand down, "you can imagine the rest." he then smiled. Despite what transpired in the last few hours, Nancy's face lit up a bit at the thought of her little brother having found love.

"Heh, looks like my little geek brother finally got lucky, huh? And with a pretty girl too." she said, looking at Elle, who looked up, blushing a little.

"Thank you." she said, looking back down with the blush vanishing. Nancy then looked at the detective, who was smiling down at his little girl.

"So what are you going to do with her? Who and where are her parents?" she asked him. Elle clung to Enigma at this, and he hugged her close.

"When all of this is over and done with, I'm going to adopt her. As for her parents, I don't really know about her mom, but her 'dad'," he looked angry when he said this but sighed, "wasn't preferable." he finished. Then he thought for a second. "Actually, I see you have a good sense in style, in my opinion at least. And I was wondering if you could take her clothes shopping once everything's simmered down. You know," he then smiled slyly, "look good for Mike. Honestly, I'd do it myself, but 1. I don't know how to shop for girls clothes, and 2. it would look weird if I did it."

"Absolutely, yeah I'd love to." she said. She then looked at Elle's head and said, "and we should probably let your hair grow out, though. Then you'd look really pretty." Elle smiled and nodded, but looked back down again. The detective noticed this, and was a little worried.

"Thanks Nancy. What's wrong, honey?" he asked Elle. She looked up at him a little aggravated and pulled him down into the basement. "Ah geez." he said when he saw her little tent. It has been kicked in and knocked down, presumably by Mike. "He's mad, isn't he?" She nodded, getting progressively more upset. She then threw the chairs and blankets around in rage, knocking things off of shelves using her powers. "Elle, stop! STOP!" the detective yelled sternly, grabbing her by the arm. "Now that was uncalled for! Why are you doing

thaaaaaaa-!" he was cut off by Elle throwing him out the back door, closing and locking it. He could see her go upstairs and out the front door, and Nancy and Jonathan dashing downstairs. He got up and went after her. "Elle! Elle! What's gotten into you?! Hey! Stop walking away from me, young lady!" Elle just ignored him and kept walking along the sidewalk. Having had enough of this, he yelled, "Eleven! That is enough!" She stopped when she heard that, and slowly turned around. She had a look of anger in her eyes as she looked down at the detective while he just looked flat out annoyed. "Elle, we're going home. Come on." he said sternly. In response, she raised her hand at him, and threw him into a lamppost. A loud *CLANG* was heard when he made contact, and landing on the ground with a *thud*. He looked up at her, with the same expression of annoyance. "Look, I don't know what Mike did, but I don't want to hurt to you!" he said, standing up and approaching her, "I only want to help you, as your dad!"

She responded by slamming him into a nearby car with a loud *thump*. Then throwing him into the air and slamming him into the ground. He didn't move immediately, but as he slowly got up, a little blood came from a small scratch on his nose. When she looked at him as she wiped her nose, she had a horrified look on her face. She snapped out of her anger and realized that she had just injured her new dad, albeit not very badly, but she was fearing the worst from him, stepping back wide-eyed with fear. She remembered what the bad men did whenever she didn't or couldn't do what they wanted her to do. He wiped his nose, and he slowly walked toward her with his hands up. "Honey, it's ok, I'm not angry at you. I know you're mad and upset at Mike, but HEY WAIT!" he began as she then ran away. "Ugh, Elle, wait! Eleven!" he yelled, chasing her. Nancy and Jonathan watched this in the distance and soon ran after them.

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Elle ran and ran, looking back to see the worried detective catching up with her. He was amazed with how fast she was for a 13 year old girl. She used her powers, moving things and tipping them over to trip him and slow him down, but they had little effect, as the detective had a lot of experience in chasing criminals and they did the exact same thing, albeit a little slower. In his eyes, Enigma saw a

confused and upset little girl, but in her eyes she saw an angry man trying to attack her and lock her away for a long time when he finally got his hands on her, just like at the lab with her old papa. Eventually, she tripped and would've fallen flat on her face if not for the detective grabbing her by the back of her shirt, stopping her mid-fall.

As the detective picked her up, she squirmed, wriggled, and kicked trying desperately to get loose from this guy as she was carried over to a street lamp. Under the street lamp, she looked back and saw her dad, panting a little with a little blood drying on his nose, looking annoyed as ever. She stopped trying to break free and submitted when she saw his face, tearing up and crying as she accepted her punishment. The detective looked at her for a few seconds...and decided to show mercy and understanding. *Her anger towards Mike caused her to wreck his basement and use her powers to try and hurt me, and her PTSD from that laboratory and fear of me punishing her extremely harshly made her run away. I shouldn't be angry with her, but I have to teach her something important.* The detective smiled and hugged her and held her like a baby, rubbing her back. She was surprised at this, pausing for a moment, and then hugged him tightly, sobbing into his shoulder and wrapping her legs around his torso.

"I'm sorry, dad." she said, sniffing and wiping her eyes.

"It's ok, honey, I'm not angry, I'm not angry at all," he said, kissing her cheek and leaning his head against hers, "but you can't get angry like that. It's not good for you or anybody. You could lash out and attack or yell at your friends or do something you'll regret. If there's a problem, come to me and together, we'll make it right. We're family after all, you and I." he told her gently yet a little sternly. Nancy and Jonathan came running around the corner, relaxing when they saw that Enigma had her in his arms.

"F-family?" Elle asked quietly.

"Yeah, and a family sticks together and helps each other out. Just like you and I." She then pointed at the two teenagers behind him.

"Family?" the detective turned to see them, smiled and said,

"Yeah, they're family too." Jonathan gave a small smile and Nancy flashed a big smile as they approached the detective and his kid. Just then, the lamps flickered.

25. Chapter 25: A Rogue Against True Evil

The detective growled and gently put Elle on the ground and took out his gun from his pocket. *The Demogorgon. It's coming.*

"Elle, get behind Jonathan and Nancy." "Come here, Elle." she walked over and Nancy grabbed her hand as Jonathan got in front of them with his pistol out. "Give Nancy your gun and take mine." he said giving him his gun with some spare rounds as Nancy took Jonathan's. "It's got a hell of a kick, so keep your elbows bent." he told Jonathan who nodded and cocked it. He then made his eyes light up as the lights flickered faster, scaring Elle as she squeezed Nancy's hand. The detective then felt the beast's signature, ready to slam his fists in its faceless...face. *I have no other choice. I'm going to have to use my...other gifts if I'm going to fight this thing and defend the others.*

As he could feel it getting closer, his hands became engulfed in blue fire, and he closed his eyes, focusing and concentrating hard on it. Then he raised his hand towards the other three, and when he did, a glowing blue bubble slowly formed around them, creating a protective shield in case the monster appeared behind or in front of them. Then he opened his eyes, only his real eyes were gone. In their place were blue stars with black voids behind them, and blue energy flowing out of them. They acted like regular eyes, only these "star-eyes" gave him a whole new enhanced perspective around him, allowing him to see things that normal people couldn't, no matter how hard they looked or what they did. Once the field had completely enveloped them, he put his hand down and waited for the damned thing to appear. Just then, the light-bulbs in the street lamps burst, with tiny shards of glass falling to the ground. The detective rose his hand and a sort of light shield materialized from it. The teenagers doubled over Elle to protect her, but the glass shards completely incinerated when they hit the field and the detective's shield. This, however, blinded the three in the glowing bubble. Now the only things that were visible were two blue flames eerily suspended in midair.

Suddenly, the flame threw itself outward, hitting the newly appeared monster directly in the head, knocking it back a little as it roared at

the darkness. In response, the detective inhaled and roared back, sounding a bit like an angry bear. The beast then ran and lunged at him only to miss and instead slashed at the other three, but when it slashed at them, its hand was severely burned, and it roared in agony as its hand was barbecued against the bubble. Elle grabbed Nancy when it attacked, scaring her.

"Get away from them!" yelled the detective as he threw the beast back and relentlessly attacked the beast, leaving it no chance to counter. Every punch that made contact with the monster looked like a meteor making impact with a planet, but the most every hit did to the beast was knock it back a little. *The hell? My supercharged fists aren't doing a damn thing to this monster, and these things are strong enough to knock down a building with just ONE punch.* The monster roared again and backhanded him away, making him hit a nearby street lamp. Elle was hiding behind Nancy when she saw him get knocked down. "Dad!" she yelled. Nancy had her arm around Elle and Jonathan stood in front of them, ready to shoot the beast. Just then, Enigma rose and roared at the beast, who charged at him, claws outstretched. Then he waited for the monster's swinging arms and claws to get in range as he dodged each of the massive quick swipes from its long, clawed arms. *Now!* The detective kick-swept it, causing it to fall right as it swiped at him, and using the momentum of the fall, the detective broke its arm over his knee and kicked it as hard, directly in the face, rocketing it upward then roundhouse kicking it a few feet away. "Ha ha! Take that, you son of a bitch!" he yelled triumphantly. It got back up and roared in pain, agony, and rage from its now completely broken arm. It broke through his guard as it full-force rammed him with its good arm, sending him flying again, hitting his face against a streetlamp, and falling on his hands against the asphalt road.

The beast roared triumphantly when it saw him get up and the scratch on his nose reopen, his palms scratched up, and blood drip down from a cut on his forehead. He looked down at his shirt and found slash marks from the beast's claws. *It just won't give up will it? Very well then, I guess I have no other choice.* The detective's palms began to gather particles from the air, forming what looked like suns in his hands. He threw the brightest of them up, which ascended and got brighter and brighter, lighting up the section of the street so that

the three in the bubble could see what was going on. They were frightened when they saw the beast, with its arm dangling about and its other hand badly burnt from the shield that was protecting them. The enraged monster ran at Enigma, his other arm flopping around limp. The detective reeled back his other hand and as soon as the monster was in range, he threw his hand out, screaming. And when he did, a highly concentrated stream of glowing blue particles, sparks, and light erupted out of it, incinerating the left side of the monster's head. It shrieked in pain as it slunk to the ground, as the pain was worse than burning its hand on the protective bubble or having it broken by a mere human. The left side of its face was blackened, charred, and smoking from the blast. Shrieking from immense pain and rage, it retreated into the darkness, disappearing into the void.

"Good riddance, beast!" he yelled, as he took down the field around the other three and reverting his eyes back to normal. The artificial star in the sky also dissipated, leaving only the moon as the main source of light. Enigma began to pant heavily, collapsing to his knees from the amount of energy he used to fight the beast in the light of the full moon. He then sat down resting on his hands, wincing at the pain from his scratches. Blood slowly dripped from his leg from earlier and his chest from the bout with the monster. One of his eyes had a popped blood vessel, while the other was bruised a little. Elle, Nancy, and Jonathan ran over to him, helping him up and walking him back to Nancy's house. Nancy bandaged his leg while Jonathan took care of his face and hands. They did his chest, together. Elle held a frozen bag of peas on his eye saying,

"My fault, my fault." tearing up again. He simply smiled, kissed her, and let her ice his eye, saying,

"Shhhh, come now. The Demogorgon could've appeared anywhere."

"No. The Upside Down."

"What about it?"

"I...I...I..." tears then rolled down her face, only for the detective to wipe them off with his sleeve.

"Hey, whatever happened at the bad place doesn't matter. Whatever happened that was wrong there, we'll make it right," he said, taking a bandaged hand and held hers, "together." He knew what she was going to say, but he didn't want her to carry that on her shoulders, not alone at least. *It was Brenner's fault, not hers. No one should carry that kind of burden, especially someone like Elle. She's innocent in all of this.* Nancy and Jonathan looked at the two as they patched up the detective.

"You really love him, huh?" Jonathan asked her.

"Yes...I love dad." she replied, almost declaring it.

"Heh, he must be a really good dad then." The detective heard a sense of passive aggression and sadness in Jonathan's voice, and put a hand on his shoulder. "Hey. You know, even through divorce, your mother is a really tough, strong person, and I admire that about her. I really do, especially in a time like this. And yes, I know about it." The teenager looked down at his feet, and nodded,

"Yeah, yeah she is." tearing up a little himself.

"Another thing," the detective said, looking him in the eye. With a patient smile, he gave Jonathan a slip with his number on it. "You've got your mother's tenacity and bravery. Hold on to it, cherish it. And most of all, know that I'll always be there to help you out, kid, and don't you forget it." Jonathan looked up when Enigma said this. He then got a flashback of Lonnie saying that to him before him and Joyce divorced. He was pretty young and Will was just a toddler at the time. He took the slip from Enigma saying,

"Thanks...Enigma." Half-smiling and patting his shoulder, the detective replied,

"Heh, don't mention it, Johnny."

26. Chapter 26: Can't Sleep

"Flo, where's Hopper?" The detective asked the secretary of the police department.

"He left an hour ago to the Byers' house." she replied back.

"Thanks." Before the detective left, he grabbed a few donuts.

"No problem, honey." Flo said as the detective headed out.

On the way to the Byers' house, Enigma noticed Joyce at the shop where she worked. She appeared to be looking for something. He decided to ask her some questions about what Hopper had found out back at her house. When he entered the door, it was then that he noticed how tall he was when he found Joyce checking out with a phone and he seemed to tower over her and a little over the cashier, who looked to be the manager. He looked at her, and back at the manager.

"Whatever she is buying, I will pay for it." he then said. After Enigma paid for a telephone and a pack of cigarettes, they headed out to Joyce's car.

"You didn't have to do that, you know." She then said on the way to her car. Stressed. I don't blame her, not after what happened to her kid.

"Think of it as an apology for being rude to you yesterday. I'm sorry if I wasn't the nicest guy back at the station. I haven't had this kind of case in the last few months, so it's kind of hard for me to sympathize with others." the detective said, putting away the phone and giving Joyce the cigarettes.

"Don't worry about that. That can't be the only reason why you came to see me." she said, taking the cigarettes and lighting one, inhaling deeply on the thing, and exhaling smoke.

"You're right, it's not. I need to stop by your house. With your permission, of course."

At this she got upset. "Why?! Hopper was JUST THERE! Why do YOU need to go snooping around my house?!" Yep, stressed. Definitely stressed.

"Because I can see things and smell things that Hopper can't. He might be good at finding clues and putting the pieces together to a basic scenario, but me? I can do so much more. I could probably even found out what really happened. Also, calm yourself. I will never know or understand how you feel, but I have never given up on a case. And I won't start now."

"...Alright, alright, you can come."

"Thanks, Joyce." said the detective as he walked off in some random direction.

"Where are you going? Don't you have a car? Do you want to ride with me?" yelled Joyce as she started the car.

"Don't worry, I know a shortcut!" yelled the detective as he faded into the crowd.

...

20 minutes passed until Joyce got back home. She got out of the car and brought the new telephone with her, when she heard someone walking around talk to themselves.

"Hello?" she said a little scared.

"Oh, hello Joyce! Just looking around the house and the shed, gathering clues." replied the voice of the detective.

"Could you let me in please? There might be something I've missed."

"Sure, sure." the mother stuttered as she let the detective in her house. The detective took her phone off her hands and carried it in for her. As he looked inside, he noticed SEVERAL things that were off to him. He set the phone down and the first thing he did was go to the phone and noticed the burn marks on the headset. *Irregular. A storm couldn't have done this sort of damage. For a storm to mess with the telephone poles is one thing but this, this is another.*

"When did this happen?" he asked, turning to her.

"Just last night. I got a call and I couldn't hear anything besides scratching and what sounded like growling noises, but then I heard what I thought was my little boy." The worried mother was starting to get upset, so the detective held her hand, saying,

"Shhhh, it's alright I'm here now. I'm gonna figure out what happened last night. Ok?" She nodded and let the detective do his thing. Hmm, a small hole in the wall. From the lock on the doorknob. "It appears he was chased by something or someone, judging from this hole. Must've really wanted to get away from whatever it was." He then went along the carpet and the closed bedroom doors, noticing things no one else would've. "He thought you were here, so he tried to get you for help, but you weren't here. He was frantic about it, running back and forth to your doors banging on them." Seeming to be following something on the ground, Enigma went outside and looked at the shed with Joyce close behind him, worrying nonstop about Will. "He sought refuge in the shed." noted the detective, walking over to the shed. "Stay back." He said sternly to Joyce. Pulling out his magnum, he slowly reached for the door, with Joyce gripping his shoulder. Then he abruptly yanked the door open his gun pointing straight ahead. "Nothing...You can let go now."

"Sorry." He went to the workbench and saw...bullets? An air rifle? *The way the bullets are arranged show desperation in defending oneself. The rifle's sweat prints show the kid's fear of whatever it was that was chasing him. The way it was on the ground revealed that the boy was taken.* The detective then unscrewed the lightbulb and inspected the fuse. "It's brand new, I replaced it yesterday." Joyce explained. He nodded in response. *If the lightbulb is new, then why is it already a quarter of the way burnt?* The detective then screwed the lightbulb back in, and began muttering to himself, putting the pieces together.

"So then that means that...but then...so then...however...that would mean that...the hell?" It was at this point that the detective noticed a slimy pinkish-reddish substance on a vent. He smelled it. It's nothing I've ever seen OR smelled.

"What? What do you see?" Enigma jumped; he'd forgotten she was still there.

"Nothing, just some cobwebs. Come back to the house, and I'll tell you what I've pieced together."

...

"So, here's what I think happened. You said Hopper found his bike by the road, yes?" the detective asked.

"Yes, yes he did." Joyce replied back, with a cigarette in her shaking hand.

"Ok. Will was on his way home from the Wheelers' house when he saw something that must've frightened him, causing him to fall off of his bike. It was nighttime so he didn't see what it was. He ran home leaving his bike behind, slamming the door into the wall causing the hole in the wall, then locking it. He then ran over to his brother's door and your door trying to...Joyce? Are you ok?" the detective asked with concern as the terrified mother looked more and more scared as the detective spoke. He gently took her hand and held it, and she squeezed his in response. "...trying to wake you up to get help. Eventually, he saw the creature or person in the window and ran out the door to the shed to get a weapon to defend himself. He locked the door and hastily grabbed his air rifle and bullets and frantically tried to load it. As soon he was ready, he was...you know." The mother then broke into tears and put her head into her hand. The detective went over and hugged her, and she cried into his shoulder. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to make you cry." the detective apologized.

"No, thank you for everything." She said.

"I WILL get your son back." the detective reassured her, she nodded in response. The detective got up and left, but not before replacing the phone and asking "Are you going to be ok on your own?" She nodded again. The detective reluctantly left and Joyce watched him leave out the window. A fog swept through, to the point where she couldn't see him anymore. A few seconds later, the fog was gone and so was the detective.

27. Chapter 27: Damn Teenagers

Enigma and Elle left the house at around 12:30 for town, where Nancy wanted to meet up with them. Through the detective's use of his shortcuts, they emerged from an alleyway near where the other two were. Right off the bat other people gave him and Elle weird looks as they walked by them, greatly annoying the detective. He could then see Nancy and Jonathan waiting by the clothes store that Nancy was talking about. Nancy looked a little shot from the detective's point of view, while Jonathan looked tired as well but not as bad. As Enigma and Elle approached them, they turned to see them, exhausted but happy to see them still. *Nancy...I'm sorry*. Enigma knelt slightly and immediately gave her a hug, feeling bad that she had to go through such a rough night, and he patted Jonathan's shoulder. As Nancy slowly hugged back, he said,

"Thanks for patching me up, guys. I appreciate it. I'm sorry you had to see those things, Nancy." She patted his back as he broke the hug.

"You're welcome, and it's ok." She then noticed Elle wearing a familiar pink dress with a jean jacket, and white sports socks with pink shoes. "Is that my old dress?" Elle kind of just looked at her quizzically. "It looks good on you." she said smiling.

"Thanks." Elle replied, smiling shyly. She could feel Enigma's hand rub her head and move to her shoulder.

"Go have fun with Nancy, alright?" he said gently, kneeling down next to her.

"Ok, dad." she said, kissing his cheek.

"Heh, alright. See you in a bit, kiddo." he said with a smile, kissing her back and going off with Jonathan.

...

Jonathan drove over to the local gun store, and found the detective waiting outside, having already arrived a few moments ago. He got out of the car and walked inside the store, the detective following

close behind him.

"Glad to see your eye is getting better." Jonathan said to him, picking up a sledgehammer then a baseball bat, putting the hammer down.

"I'm just glad you guys weren't hurt last night." the detective replied, picking up a hammer and foot long nails.

"So, those were the-" he was immediately stopped by the detective, who put his finger up suddenly over his mouth.

"So," the detective said putting his finger down when he saw that the shopkeeper wasn't even paying attention, "how'd you guys sleep last night, if at all?" he asked, a little nervously while picking up a lighter and looking at a gas tank thoughtfully. Jonathan, understanding that they shouldn't thoroughly discuss what happened last night in public, even though it wouldn't make sense, answered,

"Well, as Nancy said, she didn't sleep at all. I don't blame her, not after last night. I got a little sleep, but it was more restless than it was helpful to be honest. She was looking at a book of carnivorous animals to try and see what that...thing was, and how it behaved." he replied, pointing at a set of bear traps. The detective looked and thought for a second and nodded, motioning for Jonathan to take one.

"Elle and I would've stayed, but, well, we didn't want to get you and Nancy in trouble with her mom and your mom. Speaking of, little bucko didn't sleep at first, while I had no choice but to pass out. She couldn't go to sleep no matter what she did." he said, bringing everything to the counter for the guy to ring up, along with a few boxes of ammo for his gun and Jonathan's. As the clerk gave them their ammo, he gave them weird looks, asking,

"What are you guys doin' with your kids, these days?" Just before Jonathan spoke, the detective immediately said, closing one eye and leaning in slightly towards the clerk,

"Hey, what's wrong with a guy taking his nephew camping? We need to be prepared in case we run into anything dangerous, don't we?" he said, with a fierce look in his eye that focused directly into the clerk's

while putting a strong arm around Jonathan, bringing him close. The clerk, looking scared out of his mind, nodded and rang them up.

After the detective paid for what they got, he put the things into a box and put them into the trunk of Jonathan's car, and acted like they were talking about who was going to drive. Jonathan got into the driver's seat with Enigma in the passenger as they drove off to pick up Elle and Nancy. Enigma thought for a minute. "Sorry for acting like that back at that store. I uh, kind of overcomplicate things when I'm this tired."

"It's ok. I actually thought it was kind of funny the way you scared that guy."

"Really? Heh, thanks kid." he said, patting him on the shoulder. When they found Nancy and Elle, they had a bunch of colorful bags, things on hangers, boxes of clothes, and another brown box. When the clothes were taken care of, the detective looked in the other box to find a combat knife, what looked to be a tomahawk, throwing knives, a power drill, screws...and a pair of leather combat gloves. He looked up at Nancy and nodded in approval. "Nice finds. It was smart of you to grab more things for defenses. Every bit counts against that thing, after all." he commended her, smiling .

"Thanks. The gloves are for you, by the way, because of your hands." she said, pointing at them. He put the gloves on, making fists and moving his hands around with them on and said,

"Nice and sturdy. I like them." He hugged Nancy again, and said, "Thanks for thinking of me," smiling.

"You're welcome. They were actually Elle's idea." she said looking down at Elle. "Was it now?" he said, picking up his little girl. She nodded, saying "Family helps each other out." smiling. The detective smiled back, kissing her on the forehead.

"Yeah, yeah they do." Just as the detective put the other box away in the trunk and the clothes in the back of the car, a couple teenagers passed by, saying in a taunting tone, "Hey Nancy, did you see your new movie? It was GREAT." they said walking off.

"Ugh, teenagers. Annoying, bratty little shits. Well not you guys." the detective commented as he closed the trunk. Just then Nancy, confused, walked and looked around and was suddenly horrified, running off.

"Ah, cripes. Elle, honey, stay with Jonathan. I'll be right back." he said, pointing at Jonathan, who got Elle and himself in the car and followed Enigma as he ran after Nancy.

28. Chapter 28: I could crush you

They parked by the theater, where Nancy was. She was staring at the theater sign, and the instant the detective saw what it said, he turned and motioned Elle to close her eyes as she got out of the car. It read *All the Right Moves STARRING NANCY THE SLUT WHEELER* with the last few words in spray-paint. "I can't believe how vulgar those idiotic teenagers can be."

"Mouth-breathers?" she asked him as he put her hands down.

"No doubt it was a bunch of mouth-breathers." *Steve. Who else could've done this?* Just then, he heard laughing from the alleyway next to the theater, and Nancy looked down and was furious. Nancy saw Steve, who was with his friends and had a can of red spray paint. He noticed her and said,

"Oh, hey Nans. Enjoy your movie?" he and his friends laughed tauntingly. Nancy walked over and slapped him across the face HARD.

"What the hell, Steve? What's wrong with you?" she asked him angrily as she did. Steve's friends just said, "Oooooohhhhh!" as he rubbed his face and looked at her annoyed.

"What's wrong with me? More like, what's wrong with you, Nans?" he asked smugly. "I was worried about you. I can't believe I was actually worried about a girl who cheats on me the very next night."

"Ugh, we never even did anything together except talk! You just saw us in the window and jumped to a conclusion." she said, shoving him a bit. Then Jonathan walked around the corner and grabbed her by the shoulder gently, saying,

"Nancy, come on we have to leave. Just leave them." She was about to leave but not before being taunted by Steve's friends.

"Aww, look, the perv is here to save her. Yeah, I'm sure they had a great time last night, letting Johnny "study" with her." An obnoxious laugh came out from one of them. Jonathan eventually was able to

convince Nancy to leave as Steve was getting on her case more and more, but Steve hadn't had enough yet, so targeting Jonathan he kept shoving him from behind saying, "You know Byers, I'm surprised at you. I always took you as a queer, but you're just a screw-up just like your father. In fact, your whole family is a bunch of screw-ups I shouldn't really be surprised. Your entire house has a bunch of screw-ups you're kinda like the ring leader of them all, the world's biggest screw-up." Nancy did her best to get the visibly angry Jonathan to relax and just keep going, but before he could turn around to slam Steve in the face full-force with his fist, a deep voice said,

"Jonathan!" He looked up to see the detective holding Elle's hand, who walked over and took Jonathan's hand, leading him out of the alley way with Nancy walking with them. Jonathan relaxed when he saw the two and calmly walked with Elle to the detective, no longer paying any attention to Steve, who out of nowhere fell flat on his ass by his foot shooting out. The detective put his hands on Jonathan's shoulders and looked at him, a little sternly. Jonathan just looked at the ground, sighing. The detective then hugged him saying, "It's alright, Johnny. Steve's just egging you on, so don't worry about anything he says." Jonathan nodded, hugging back, glad that the detective was there. Nancy put her hand on his shoulder while Elle still held his hand while wiping her nose of a little blood.

"...Thanks. You too, Elle." he said. Elle looked up and smiled at him while the detective replied,

"Don't worry, we're here for you, kiddo."

"Aww, how cute. The screw-up perv is getting comforted by his gay bodyguard and his freak kid." Steve said, with his friends laughing obnoxiously. *Ok, now that was just too far.* This severely pissed off the detective, as he always hated working with teenagers with a few exceptions. In this case, Nancy and Jonathan.

"Jonathan, Nancy, get Elle in the car and wait for me, please." Immediately, Nancy and Jonathan took Elle to the car, knowing what was about to go down. Elle sat next to all of the dresses in the back while the other two sat in the front, watching the confrontation play out. The detective stared down at Steve with a face that basically said, "I'm going to kill you." In response, Steve nervously laughed and

backed off a little bit.

"What are you gonna do? Smash me into something like the big doofus that you are, Andre the Giant?" he said, laughing a little and trying to act all tough. "Oh, you wanna go? You wanna go? Alright, come on then, let's go!" he said, putting his hands up, dancing around with his friends laughing at the detective. In response, he closed his eyes and folded his arms, thinking for a second. He smiled sinisterly, then maniacally.

"Heh heh heh heh heh, it would appear that you've forgotten what I can do to someone like yourself. How disappointing, how sad, how...unfortunate...for you at least. Very well then, I guess I have no choice but to teach you yet another lesson. A true lesson." he said, his voice deepening, and widely opening one eye that stared down Steve and his friends. Only the thing was, it wasn't an eye; it was an empty black void. Then a glowing white dot slowly formed in the void and was engulfed in blue fire, which sort of poured a little out of the void. Steve stepped back and looked scared for a second, but laughed it off anyways.

"Oh? What are you gonna teach me? How to look even more hideous, like that kid?" he said, pointing at Elle. He said something else, but the detective didn't care with his smile now gone and the other eye now open. "I thought you were just taking her for a walk, but since you're friends with the king of screw-ups, it doesn't surprise me that you'd go off and shave her head like that." he said to the almost fuming detective. His eyes were practically pouring with blue fire. "Aw, is the creepy queer thug aww angwy? He is right you know, bodyguard of the king of screw-ups." said one of the two girls with a mocking crying face. "Bet you're not even as tough as you look." Steve then threw a punch at the detective's chest, but he caught the fist, lifting up the teenager. He looked enraged at the teenager, his teeth bared and his eyes swarming with the flames, and Steve shrunk in fear. He so badly wanted to destroy Steve and his friends, burn them, incinerate them, but he looked back to see Nancy, Jonathan, and Elle watching as this all unfolded. He could see the fear in their eyes. He then breathed slowly for a few seconds, thinking about this. *No, I can't waste my time and energy with this imbecile. Plus, I don't want to scare Elle and the other two. I mean, I'm a grown man. I should know*

better than to beat up a bunch of insignificant teenagers, a bunch of kids.

He closed his eyes, and sighed, opening them with his real eyes back with the blue flames dissipating. He looked back at the delinquents, and down at Steve sternly, and threw him back at his friends by his arm. He flew against the wall and landed on his face, scratching it on the ground. The detective scoffed, and walked off towards Jonathan, Nancy, and Elle. Troy tried to grab him and pull him back, but the detective grabbed and threw him back by his neck before walking away again. He landed hard and Caroline and presumably the tattler rushed over to help him and Steve when the detective was gone. The detective reached the car when Nancy and Jonathan came out and put their hands on his shoulders, but he said,

"I'm alright. I'm just glad I didn't do something I'd regret myself." he said laughing a little, putting his arms around them. Elle came out and hugged him, he rubbed her head. Just then his head shot up, hearing something. It was a distant, voice yelling, "SHIT! SHIT! Come on, Mike!" *Dustin! Mike!* "Elle! We must go, now!" he said urgently to her. She looked at him a little startled. "Mike and Dustin! They could be in danger!" She then looked frightened, understanding now, scared of what might be happening to them.

"Wait, my little bro's in danger?! I'm coming too!" Nancy declared.

"No Nancy, you and Jonathan must prepare yourselves in case that monster attacks again!" he replied solemnly.

"No! I have to help out! If it's my brother who's in trouble, then I have to!"

"Nancy! This could be a job for me alone! I can't have you risk your own life!"

"I'd rather do that than leave my brother out there knowing he's in trouble! I have to, Enigma! Please! You have to understand!" she said, yanking his coat stubbornly, refusing to move. The detective looked at her, surprised. Usually she trusted his choices, but this time she refused, even if it could be dangerous. He sighed, and nodded.

"Very well then, Jonathan, take the clothes back to Nancy's house and

the other things," he looked back to see if the delinquents were still there, which they weren't as they had run off scared for their lives after what the detective did, "back to your house where no one will find them. Nancy, come with me and Elle. We'll meet back up at Nancy's house." Jonathan nodded and drove off. The detective picked up Elle on his back and Nancy followed as they took one of the detective's shortcut through the alleyway.

29. Chapter 29: I was never mad at you

They walked up on a path on the way to the edge of the massive quarry. As they ran up the path, they saw the other Troy with a switch blade and his big friend trapping Dustin and Mike on either side. Troy had his arm around Dustin with the knife by his mouth with Mike right on the edge of the cliff. Elle got down, terrified when she saw Mike on the edge and Nancy was getting angrier by the second. Dustin pleaded with him not to jump, and Troy's friend seemed to want out of it himself, but Troy kept saying that if Mike didn't jump then he'd "Take baby tooth here to the dentist early! Come on Mike! Dentist opens in 5...4...3...2..." Mike then jumped, Nancy and Elle yelling,

"MIKE!" running over. As they all saw Mike tumble to his doom, Elle saw what looked like a blue and black comet careening his way out of the corner of her eye. she looked back to see the detective gone with a series of scorch marks on the ground and little blue flames dissipate.

"Dad...please hurry." she mumbled. One moment Mike was falling, next moment he was caught up in the comet, creating huge waves in the lake as it flew across the quarry. Then it shot up and flew around to the other side of the quarry, landing with a crash, creating a massive cloud of dust and a small shock-wave, knocking Troy down which let Dustin go free while the others braced themselves and covered their eyes. In the midst of the great dust cloud, they could see two blue glowing candle-lights eerily suspended in midair. With a wave of his hand, the detective cleared away the dust, revealing him with Mike standing next to him, with his arm around the boy's shoulder. An angry Nancy and Elle looked down at Troy's friend as he scrambled off into the woods, leaving Troy to face them alone.

"Hey! Get back here! Don't leave me here!" Elle and Nancy stepped closer, while the detective used his powers and made plasma barriers, ensuring that escape for the bully wouldn't be possible, stepping closer himself, his eyes burning brighter. "Get away from me!" he said, holding his knife out, but it flung out of his hand into the lake. His arm then suddenly broke, and he doubled over slightly yelling in

pain. He looked at Elle, whose nose was bleeding. "You freak! Leave me alone!" Then Nancy was completely looming over him, looking pissed.

"If you even THINK about hurting my brother and his friends again, you'll regret it." she said, angrily. He was then yanked up by the collar, terrified as he looked into the candle light-eyes of the detective.

"Oh, yes. Yes. You. WILL!" he yelled, his eyes flaring with blue flames. He then threw the bully, who up and ran off, cradling his arm, but not before being tripped again by Elle, who fell into Mike's arms, and Enigma put down the barriers as Troy ran away. Mike caught her, tearing up. She looked up at him, tearing up herself with her lip quivering and sniffles coming out.

"Elle..."

"Mike..." They locked eyes for a few moments, then kissed each other on the cheek and hugged each other tightly, Elle wiping her nose with her jacket. Tears fell to the ground from the reunited young couple. "I'm sorry...I'll never leave you again." she said in between sobs and whimpers, kissing him again and again.

"No, Elle, it was my fault, I shouldn't have yelled at you the way I did, I shouldn't have called you a traitor. I'm so sorry, Elle. I don't want you to leave," he said as they slid down to their knees, still in each others arms, "I want you to stay." he said in a shaky voice, occasionally wiping his eyes of tears. He then looked at her and they locked eyes again, wiping her face of her tears.

"So do I..." Elle replied, holding his hand against her face. They smiled at each other, happy that they were back together. Nancy then hugged her brother, glad that he was safe. He hugged her back reluctantly, being that it was his sister after all and that she was just worried about him. The detective reverted his eyes back to normal, smiling down at Mike and Elle, glad they were back together, as was Dustin, who was hugging Elle with a goofy smile on his face while Mike and Nancy bickered about Mike's safety for a few seconds. Mike looked back up at the detective, who looked back at him.

"Hey, Enigma?" he asked him.

"Yeah, Mikey? What's up?" he said kneeling down. Mike then hugged him, surprising him.

"Thanks...for saving my life, and for bringing Elle and I back together. I have no one except you to thank-" he was interrupted by a clearing of the throat from his older sister, who looked at him expectantly, "and MAYBE you too, Nans." The detective chuckled at that, and hugged him back.

"Don't worry about it, bucko," he said, tussling his hair, "I hate seeing you two sad and depressed when you're apart." he said as he got up. "When I found Elle alone in the woods, I feared the worst about you guys. When I heard what happened, I thought you two ended it altogether." Mike lowered his head guiltily, but Enigma picked his head back up with his hand. "Hey, I'm not mad, I was never mad at any of you. I know you just wanted to find Will, which is understandable. However, you must understand, Mike, that what Elle did was for your own safety. The Upside Down is in no way a safe place. Trust me, I know. I've been there." he said, remembering what happened last night, along with his bout with the monster as they then began their walk back to Mike's house. Elle and Mike held hands the whole journey there, and they walked close to each other. Dustin and Nancy simply looked at them as the detective was on his guard the whole time, in case someone or something attacked. When they found their bikes, Dustin got on his and Mike did too with Elle riding with him, her arms wrapped around him tightly as they rode off. The detective carried Nancy on his back, tree-jumping his way there with Nancy gripping his shoulders as they all went off to the house of the Wheelers where Jonathan was waiting.

30. Chapter 30: They're not taking you again

After a little while of traveling, the five were able to make it back safely. Enigma was relieved to find Jonathan waiting for them, but the relief soon left him when he found something that shouldn't be and wasn't there before. A Hawkins industry truck with a handyman talking into a walkie-talkie. *By the looks of it, the man has already done his job and has been waiting for hours for nothing. And only now when he saw Elle did he talk into tha-* Wait. *Hawkins Industries...* As Enigma entered the house through the back door, he thought about it for a few seconds, looking out the window at the handyman and truck a few times. Then he realized something horrifying. *Hawkins Laboratory.* He immediately went back outside, gun drawn with a loaded carousel. Just then, there was a gunshot as the detective killed off the handyman. *They're after us. Brenner...damn you. You'll pay. You'll pay for what you did to One!* He went back in the house to find them talking on their own walkie-talkie.

"Lucas! Lucas, come in!" Mike yelled into it. Then a static voice from the receiver said,

"Mike! You...ed to run, NOW!...ad men re...ming! Th...ba...en are...co...!" Then it stopped completely.

"The bad men are coming!" the detective deciphered as he ran into the room. They all turned to see him putting his gun away. "We have to leave, now! Lucas isn't wrong!" The detective yelled, and his eyes widened as he saw more trucks gather outside.

"Bad papa...is coming...for me." Elle said, a little scared and clung to Mike.

"Don't worry, Elle! I won't let them get you." Mike told her, holding her close.

"Neither of us will." Nancy added.

"Indeed, we'll protect you. Especially me." the detective also added, smiling at her. "Right, we need to focus on getting out of here! Nancy, go with Jonathan and find Hopper and Joyce. They're our

best bet at getting help. Now, from the sound of that call from Lucas, he's biking his way here as fast as he can. You three are with me. I'm gonna protect you guys on the way to a place that is safe."

"Home?" Elle asked.

"No, somewhere else. They'll probably be expecting us there, from all of the cameras they probably have set up around the place. Any other ideas?" Mike thought for a second, then piped up,

"I know! Follow me and Dustin there!"

"Right! Let's go! I don't know how much time we have until they bust the door down." Nancy ran upstairs, telling her mom that she was going somewhere and that she'd be back later tonight and left abruptly as Jonathan was still waiting outside. The detective lead the kids out the door, and they scrambled onto their bikes and rode off immediately, Dustin putting on a kind of headset and contacting Lucas and Elle held on to Mike for dear life. As they rode down the road, Dustin yelled,

"Where's your dad?!" Elle looked around and saw him...surfing? In the air?

"Dad!" she yelled pointing at the detective. Mike turned to see the detective descend next to them, flying on some kind of blue disc with his eyes flaring blue.

"Don't look back! They're right behind us!" the detective yelled. He wasn't lying; as Lucas caught up and joined with them, there were fast moving Hawkins Industries trucks coming right for them behind them.

"How are you doing that?!" Dustin yelled, in awe.

"I'll explain later! Let's just focus on getting to where we need to go!"

"Wait, can't you fly without that?!" Mike asked while focusing on the road in front of him.

"I can, but this is much easier to maneuver and I only just found out that I could fly directly! Not to mention, that takes more out of me

than this does! Look out!" he yelled as a truck came around the corner, driving right toward them. Then out of nowhere, it flew over their heads with a huge dent in the front. Enigma then appeared behind it and punched it towards the other trucks, stopping them dead in their tracks, allowing the others to escape. Mike could feel Elle's grip loosen and her head resting on his backpack, wiping her nose. The detective flew down next to them and took Elle in his arms, carrying her the rest of the way to where they were going.

31. Chapter 31: Getting the Kids to Safety

They arrived at the junkyard and the kids scrambled to get their bikes underneath a broken down bus, using grass to hide them, and ran inside the bus and ducked behind the old seats. Mike and Elle looked around and out the windows, but didn't see the detective.

"Uh, guys? Where'd he go this time?" he asked sounding a little nervous. The detective stood by, hidden in the trees in case things got wayward. He reverted his eyes and relaxed a little and took his gun out and loaded it, watching the bus. He looked at the bus and waited. Then he saw the kids look out the windows, presumably looking for him, so he waved his hand in the air and motioned the kids to stay down. Mike then gave him the thumbs up and said, "Guys, get down! They might be coming!" As the kids got behind the seats, the detective was surveying the area, making sure no one came, he could hear static coming from the bus. From what the detective could hear and make out, it was Nancy's voice. *Oh good, they made it*, he thought as he sighed with relief.

"Mike, it's Nancy. You need to tell us where you are so we can get you!" she said into the microphone.

Then he saw the three boys disagree and bicker over something, presumably whether or not to respond. *Why are they arguing? If it's Nancy, why not answer?* Then he heard another static voice, but it was deeper and more gruff. *Hopper*.

"Hey kids this is the chief and we need you to respond. We can protect you and we can help you, but you HAVE to tell us where you are so we can get you."

Then they thought and talked for a minute, and replied back, saying,

"This is Mike Wheeler and we're hidden in the junkyard. They haven't spotted us yet, but we don't know how much longer until they find us."

Good, help's coming...and the nuisance bastards as well. Excellent, just...just great. The detective thought as he cocked the trigger of his

gun and waved to the kids, telling them to hide, and they did, with Elle and Mike holding each other and Dustin and Lucas hiding behind the least worn down benches in the broken down vehicle. Not long after they talked to the chief, two black cars drove in with men in suits who were armed...*on a search to find a little girl and her friends...what, the hell.* Soon, the men got out of the cars and searched the area. One of them checked near the bus, looking behind the brush and found the kids' bikes. *Oh no.* The detective then took action and jumped down from the tree, silent as ever. He then brought their attention away from the bus by throwing a pebble at the back of the head of the man who found the bikes.

"Ow! Who's there? Show yourself!" he said, aiming at his gun at the trees. A loud gunshot was heard, and another man fell, yelling in immense pain as blood drenched his suit where he was shot. He immediately collapsed to his knees, clutching his shoulder with that arm going limp. Elle held Mike tighter, fearful that they might have found Enigma and killed him. Mike hugged her closer and rubbed her back, comforting her, even though he himself was petrified as well. Then two more gunshots were heard, killing the other two men. The detective walked up to the injured man, slamming his foot on his good hand, forcing the injured man to release his weapon from the sheer force and pain from the detective's strong foot. The detective aimed his weapon directly at his face and fired just as Hopper drove in. He looked around the place as he got out, and he was glad to see that the detective was ok.

"Glad to see you have the situation under control." he said when he saw the man on the ground, with bullet holes between their eyes, a little relieved.

"What? You doubted me?" the detective replied jokingly. "Heh, glad to see you too, Jim." The chief nodded, and asked,

"Where are they?" The detective pointed at the bus, and walked in with the detective following, his gun still drawn in case more came. "Alright, we don't have a lot of time, so grab what you have and let's go." At first, the kids just stared at him in shock, but when he yelled, "Let's go!" they ran out of the bus and piled into his truck, as the detective put their bikes in the back.

"Where are the others?" he asked Hopper.

"They're at Joyce's house. I take it we'll see you there?" The detective nodded, saying,

"Yeah, yeah you will, but I've got something to take care of first." He then shook the chief's hand, who got in the driver's seat. "Thanks for comin, Jim." The chief nodded and slammed the door shut. The detective walked over to where Mike and Elle were sitting, knocking on the window with Hopper rolling it down. Elle sprang at the detective and hugged him, glad he was ok. "I'm ok, honey. Are you?" he asked, hugging her back.

"Yeah, scared I lost you." she said.

"Oh. It's alright, honey. Dad's here and he's not going anywhere anytime soon. Ok?" She nodded. "I'll see you in a bit. This man driving's name is Hopper, and he's going to take you somewhere safer than here, alright?" She nodded but looked down, and the detective lifted her head up by her chin with his finger. "Hey, don't worry, I'll meet you there. Plus, you've got Mike with you."

"Waaaaaiiit, you and Mike are a thing?!" Dustin and Lucas yelled, but before they could say anything else, the detective glared at them, shutting them up. Mike then held her hand, blushing a little. She hugged him in response, blushing herself, and she was glad to be with him again.

"Alright, enough bonding time. We need to get moving before we get noticed." Hopper said, pointing at the helicopter. The detective nodded, and said to Mike,

"Hey, take care of her alright, Mikey? I don't know how long this will take."

"Don't worry, I will. See you at Jonathan's place." he replied.

"Heh, alright buddy. You too." the detective said, with a smile and one eye closed.

"Bye dad." she said. The detective smiled at her as she leaned on Mike's shoulder, who put his arm around her shoulder and was as

waving at the detective as Hopper then rolled the window up. She waved at him too as he walked off into the woods, and before they drove away, he waved back at them before he faded into the brush and dead trees. However, he hadn't left yet, he just waited for them to leave so that he could take care of the helicopter.

32. Chapter 32: This will not be tolerable

That helicopter could jeopardize all of this if they see Elle in Hopper's truck, putting the kids and Hop in the worst kind of danger. Hmm...the only way to get rid of that thing is to go up there, kill the pilots, and steer that thing into the ground. Either that or use a plasma shot to destroy it. However, the debris from the explosion could cause nearby houses to get seriously damaged. Shooting it isn't going to do a damn thing since the bullets will lose momentum if they're lucky to get halfway up there, and throwing things at it won't work for the same reason. Looks like I'll have to go up there and kill the pilots myself. The detective activated his eyes and waved his hand upward, causing a cloud of little blue particles to form next to him. When enough particles had gathered, it flattened out and solidified, creating the platform that he used to follow Mike to this place. He mounted it and waited until the helicopter wasn't facing his direction. Now. He zipped up to the helicopter, riding the platform, with his coat flowing behind him like a cape and the flames in his eyes creating a trail of fire behind him as he raced toward the airborne vehicle.

He flew up next to the copilot and yanked him out of his seat, killing him without a single noise, allowing the lifeless body to fall to the ground. As the pilot looked on his right, he didn't see the copilot. Then he was yanked out of his chair and the last thing he saw were two flaming, blue orbs glowing against black ominous voids before he fell to his death with a bullet in his shoulder. The detective got off of the platform, climbed into the cockpit, flicked all of the switches off, and yanked the main control stick forward, steering it towards the ground. As it began to careen down to the ground, spinning out of control, the detective looked around and leaped out of the side of the aircraft opposite the direction it was spinning. As he fell, he reached out towards the floating platform, which sped toward him at an unimaginable speed. When it broke his fall, he was just inches above the ground. He stared at the ground, eyes flaring as he hyperventilated for a few seconds. He looked back up to see the helicopter careening down and quickly sped out of the way.

Just before it hit the ground, he created a protective field surrounding the helicopter and where it was going to land. *Please*

God, let this work. he thought to himself as he shrunk its size the closer the helicopter got to the ground. As it did, there was a flash of light as a massive shockwave collided against the walls of the field, causing the detective to struggle a little with keeping it active, as the force of the contained explosion caused it to "crack" and begin to fade in and out, similar to static. Once it gradually receded, the detective collapsed to his knees on the suspended platform and breathed heavily and quickly, and wiped his forehead and found beads of sweat rolling down. *Possibly from the strain of trying to contain that blast.* Enigma then got rid of the protective field and collapsed to his hands. He lowered the platform to the ground and got off of it, and waved it away, causing it to dissolve into the air and into his skin, giving him some energy back. He then reverted his eyes back to normal and collapsed again to his knees. *Damn this strain.* He was eventually able to get himself back on his feet, albeit the use of trees for support and eventually a walking stick, as he then disappeared into the woods, off to Joyce's house.

33. Chapter 33: Meaningless Crying

As Enigma stumbled out of the woods next to Jonathan's place, he was relieved to see the car parked in the driveway. Nancy ran out of the house, Jonathan following close behind her. "Enigma!" she said loudly as she approached the stumbling detective, who smiled and hugged her and patted Jonathan on the shoulder, who smiled nervously when he saw the detective.

"Hey guys. I'm ok, just tired," he said as he walked along to the house with the two walking next to him in case he fell. When he came through the door, he was greeted by the voice of a familiar paranoid mother,

"Enigma..." and a hug from her. He dropped the stick and hugged her back, kneeling down a little.

"Joyce. I uh...missed you too." He sat down on the couch and relaxed, tired from dealing with the helicopter. Nancy and Jonathan sat on either side of him, with Joyce pulling up a chair.

"Hopper told me everything. We went to find information from a woman named Terry Ives. Hopper said he found out about her in the newspaper archives. When we got to her house, we met who I thought was her sister. She said that we were 'five years too late'. She said that the woman had been doing LSD for years for an experiment of taking the mind beyond its limits or something. There was a complication, however. Terry was pregnant. The sister or care taker of the women said that she believed that her daughter was capable of all kinds of extraordinary things like telepathy and telekinesis," immediately after the detective heard this, his eyes widened. He looked at Nancy and then at Jonathan, who looked at him, realizing who Joyce was talking about. Elle. "When her daughter, Jane, was born," she continued, "the science organization immediately took the child directly after birth. The sister said that the daughter was a miscarriage. There were no medical records, nor was there a birth certificate, making her the 'perfect human test subject'. She sued the organization multiple times on the account that they took her daughter. However, being that there were no records proving that 'Jane' WAS her daughter, she lost the cases." The detective put his

head into his hand, tearing up a little as he realized what may have to happen. Jonathan put his hand around his shoulder while Nancy side-hugged him. "Enigma, are you ok?" Joyce asked putting her hand on his shoulder. He nodded, looking up at her, while wiping tears off his eyes.

"You're about to meet this girl in a few minutes. She has a shaved head, wearing a pink dress underneath a jean jacket. Her and I...her and I..." he said in a shaky voice before he put his head back into his hand. Joyce moved closer to him, holding his hand in her hands. His eyes began to water and he choked up when he explained, "I said I would adopt her. That her and I would...would live together, like...like a family," tears began to fall from his eyes, hitting the floor after saying that. "Her old dad, her 'papa', was in no way merciful or generous to her. He used her for his own benefits. I am all she has, and she's all I got," tears were almost streaming down his face, causing him to wipe his eyes constantly, "I've already lost enough people as it is. Comrades, partners...friends," the painful memory of One caused his eyes to be almost like two waterfalls with his voice getting shakier and shakier. "The thought of losing her, of giving her up to someone else, it's just that...I...I...I don't want to lose her!" he yelled, slamming his fists on the coffee table, cracking it a little.

"Enigma, wha...what are you talking about?" Joyce asked the distraught detective, holding his hand again.

"This little girl...is Jane. And once Terry knows she's with me, she'll want her back." he said, wiping his eyes. Joyce then understood, hugging the detective. "I know I don't have to, but it would be wrong not to, even if her mom is a drug addict, to bring Elle to see her real mom. I know it's the right thing to do, but I don't want to lose her, Joyce. I don't want to lose her." he said, hugging Joyce back. Just the thought of Elle leaving him for good was enough to break him down into tears.

"I know, Enigma. Trust me, I know." Joyce said comfortingly, while holding him. "You know, you can ask her what she wants to do." The detective scoffed at this, saying,

"Yeah, but what good is a choice when she doesn't even know her own mom?"

"Honestly, I don't think Elle should meet her mother and aunt. Terry's sister sounds pretty rude from what Joyce is saying, and not to mention how her real mom isn't even sane from all of the drugs she's done and is still doing. From my point of view, I think Elle is safest with you." Nancy said to the detective, patting his shoulder. Jonathan nodded in agreement.

"Enigma, Terry's sister said that...she hallucinates that Jane is with her. I've seen the room that she's kept for this girl, but there was no girl there. So if you were to bring this girl to her, she probably won't even recognize her and wouldn't want her to begin with. So don't worry about that." the detective looked up, swiftly wiping his eyes out of humiliation.

"So I cried, for literally no reason." he said annoyed, his composure coming back to him.

"Well, no. You were just scared of losing this girl you were talking about. It just means you care about her that much." Joyce explained to him. Just then a pair of headlights could be seen passing through the windows. The detective got up, loaded and cocked his gun, and stood in front of them. Nancy took Jonathan's, who had the detective's stick while Joyce had an axe. Knocking could be heard, and the detective slowly approached the door, yanking it open to find the barrel of his weapon pointed at Hopper's chest, with the other four kids close behind him.

34. Chapter 34: The Final Pieces

The detective then went out the door passing them, ignoring them and surveying the area. He then ushered Hopper and the kids inside while waving the barrel of his gun around in case anyone dangerous came. Once he felt they were truly safe and alone, he cautiously opened the door while still facing the woods as the sun set over the horizon and closed it and locked it. Nancy went around with Joyce closing the curtains to the windows while the detective flopped on the couch, uncocking his gun and put it away, closing his eyes. Not long after, there was the familiar feeling of someone leaping onto his stomach, hugging him close with their little arms. *Oh, who else. She just couldn't resist, could she?* Opening one eye, he could see the shaved head of his little girl as she snuggled into his chest. Smiling, he brought the edges of his trench coat around her and hugged her close, kissing her head and rubbing the back of it with his hand.

"You really do care about her, don't you?" Joyce said, breaking the silence. He looked up to find all of them sitting down, staring at him and Elle. A little annoyed he said,

"Yeah," opening both eyes, "what's it to you?" he added hugging her closer, a little on edge.

"Relax, papa bear, she's just saying that you care about her. She's not implying anything." Hopper said gruffly. "Now it's very apparent that you do from how edgy you're acting and how you're holding her."

"Now don't you get all analytical with me, Jim. I've already had a hard time with that damn copter and those men, I don't need it from you." He then noticed Mike handing Elle the walkie-talkie, and as Elle looked at it, the detective gently pushed it away and looked at his watch. "Nah, not yet, Mikey. Elle's already weak from slamming that truck, and I used quite a bit of my energy to get rid of that helicopter. Besides we got a few hours before night falls, let's just relax. We've all been through a lot lately and we could all use some rest. Namely the little girl." he added, closing his eyes. As Joyce and Lucas opened their mouths to object, he snapped his flaring blue eyes open, "My daughter is not some tool to use at your beck and call!" he yelled firmly at them, eyes pouring with furious blue flames, teeth bared,

and Elle hugged close to his chest. As he watched as they backed off, he slowly closed his eyes, falling asleep with Elle in his arms already snoozing. They walked off into another room, leaving the two to rest.

...

At around 9:55 PM, Mike shook them awake. Enigma's blue eyes flared up in surprise as he snapped awake.

"Wha?! Huh?! Who's there? Oh, hey Mikey." he said, tussling Mike's hair and reverting his eyes back to normal.

"Hey Enigma. Everyone's waiting in the dining room for you guys." The detective nodded and yawned widely, releasing Elle, who kissed him on the cheek and went with Mike to the dining room with the detective following. He looked at them all, with a guilty, sorrowful expression.

"I'm sorry I snapped, guys. I...I don't know why I did. I didn't mean to. It was protective instincts, I think. I can't find any other way to explain it. That or-"

"It's ok, Enigma. I know you care about the little girl." Joyce said, cutting him off.

"Yeah, why else did you call her your daughter?" Hopper asked.

"I said that?" Enigma replied, a little shocked. He didn't remember saying that, but before he could think further, Elle hugged his arm, saying,

"I love you too, dad..." looking up at him, smiling. The detective smiled and picked her up and put her on his lap, wrapping his arms around her waist.

"I guess I did then, because I love her as my own kid." he said, kissing her head and putting his on hers. "I snapped because I honestly felt like she was being used, like she had in her life. No consent or permission, she was forced to do what her 'papa' wanted her to do. If she didn't, wouldn't, or couldn't, they would lock her away for a long time." Nancy laid her hand on his shoulder. Mike walked up to her and hugged her, saying,

"I'm sorry I didn't ask if you were ok with it, Elle. I should've asked." She kissed his cheek, blushing.

"It's ok, Mike." She said quietly. Mike was blushing himself as he asked,

"Do you honestly feel used, Elle? Or do you genuinely want to help? Because if you feel that way, you don't have to do this." reassuringly.

"Want to help...find Will." she replied, and he handed Elle the radio. She looked down at it and messed with it tuning it in and out, but with no success. The detective then chimed in with,

"It's no use. The radio is too weak. We need something stronger and more efficient." He looked down at Elle who was tugging the edges of his coat.

"Bath." she said quietly. The detective thought for a minute. *A sensory deprivation tub. It could work, but how can we make one of those?* Dustin was one step ahead and called his science teacher, Mr. Clarke, to ask how to make one. With much persuasion, he convinced the science teacher to help him. *What a smart little guy.* After writing down a list of materials and instructions for making the thing, Dustin hung up and gave them to the detective, who closed one eye and patted his shoulder as he took them, smiling. He looked them over as Dustin asked Joyce if she still had the kiddie pool, who said yes, and where they could find salt, in which Jonathan said that they should have a whole shed of rock salt at the high school. Shortly after Hopper took the kids' bikes out of the car and set them up against the house, he took Jonathan and went to the high-school while Joyce took Nancy, Lucas, and Dustin to the middle school. As for the other three, Enigma activated his blue eyes and summoned his platform. Mike and Elle watched in awe as the blue cloud formed before their very eyes. Soon, it flattened out and solidified, and the detective hopped on, with the other two mounting the platform. The two lovers never let go of each other's hands as they flew upward towards the middle school on the glowing blue disc.

35. Chapter 35: Asking a Girl Out

The detective looked back at them, smiling at Mike and Elle and ascended higher and higher until they were above the clouds. The starry night sky was clear as ever above the clouds, and the moon shone its light brighter than before. Deciding to let them be alone together for a little bit, Enigma created another platform and mounted that one, letting the other two have the one they were currently on, and lie down, enjoying the peaceful glow of the moonlight and little stars for a while before getting back to the task at hand. The two lovers sat next to each other on the suspended platform, gazing into each others eyes. Mike couldn't get over how the moon made her practically glow while the stars made her eyes sparkle in such a way that was captivating, and he couldn't take his eyes away from her beautiful face. Gathering up his courage, he broke the silence,

"Elle?"

"Yes, Mike?" she replied, smiling at him. Mike's heart was beating faster than a jackrabbit and his face was burning up she was so pretty to him.

"I-I was wondering if, when this is all over, you would like to go to the snowball with me." his stomach twisted and turned, and he was blushing when he asked this. She looked confused and asked,

"Snowball?" He then explained,

"It's some cheesy dance at school where you dress up really nicely and go dance with someone you really like." Unbeknownst to them the detective was well-hidden, watching, trying hard to keep his cool as he saw this play out.

"You...really like me?" She said, blushing hot pink, getting closer to Mike, who was blushing profusely.

"Y-yeah. I really like you, Elle. D-do you uh, like me too?" he asked nervously, getting closer too. They were right next to each other, inches away from each other's blushing red faces.

"Yes, I..." Elle thought for a second, and then finished with, "I like you too, Mike." and leaned in, pressing her soft lips against Mike's. He was shocked at first, and passionately kissed back, wrapping his arms around her, pulling her closer and she did the same. They stayed like that for a little bit before Mike said,

"I like you too Elle." At that exact moment, a star zipped across the starry night sky. Mike immediately pointed at it frantically.

"Elle, look! A shooting star! Quick! Make a wish, Elle!" Without a second thought, she blurted out,

"I wish for a mountain of eggos!" Mike bursts out laughing. Elle looked at him confused. "What? You said 'make a wish'." In between laughs, he said,

"I know! I just didn't expect that! Oh, I love you, Elle!" He stopped when he realized what he just said, and instantly his face went red and he hid his face in his hands. "I'm sorry! I just uh, kind of blurted it out!" he said, panicking a little.

"You...love me?" She asked, putting his hands down.

"W-well, I don't not, but I uh, um, oh geez." he nervously stammered. *Oh no, did I creep her out? I didn't even mean it like that, but if I say no, what if I break her heart?* he thought as he stared at her. Her face was red as well, and had a look of surprise. *Yep, it's over. I scared her and I didn't even mean to.* He was waiting for it, for her to reject him just like every other girl he said that he liked, but her surprised look turned into a smile as her hands held his.

"So do I." she said, smiling at him. The detective sat down on his platform, happy for the profusely blushing couple. Mike then asked her, "Do you...do you want to out on a date with me? When this is all over?" Again, she looked at him confused.

"Go out on a date?" she asked him.

"Yeah, it's when you go out with someone you...love and do something fun with them. Just you and that person, alone together. Whether you see a movie, get something to eat, you enjoy it with that

person. So uh, will you go out with me?" Now understanding, she kissed him on the lips again as if to say "Yes!" *Nice job sealing the deal with her, kid. She's yours for good now...I'll help out in case anyone gets in the way and causes fallout.* The detective thought to himself. The happy couple then leaned their heads on each other's shoulders, watching the moonlight and gazing at the stars. After a few seconds, the detective flew over to the ever-blushing couple and stepped onto their platform, absorbing the other one. He then commanded it to fly onwards slowly to keep the kids from falling off.

36. Chapter 36: Time to Finish This

When they made it to the middle school, Mike helped Elle off the platform and Enigma jumped off of it, absorbing it in the process and reverting his eyes back to normal. He tussled Mike's hair while he rubbed Elle's head and put his hands around their shoulders, smiling down at them as they walked into the school. They found everyone else in the gymnasium, making a makeshift sensory deprivation bath. Hopper was pouring bag after bag of rock salt until Dustin determined if it was enough by testing its density with an egg. Nancy saw the three walk in, smiling when she saw Elle and Mike hand in hand, happy for them. The detective then brought Elle aside with Mike, who sat next to her holding her hand still.

"Elle," Mike began, "we'll be with you the entire time you're looking for Will and whoever else is in that place." he said, stroking his hand.

"If you ever get scared, never be afraid to call for help from any of us. Like your boyfriend said," Mike glared at and shoved him, blushing a little, "we'll be right next to you."

"And we won't go anywhere."

"Exactly. In fact," the detective cupped his hands together and closed his eyes, and soon there was light shining out of the cracks. When he felt he was finished, he opened his hands to reveal a small artificial golden star the size of a small stone that floated in his hands. It was so bright, it practically outshined the lights in the gymnasium. He then said, "Take this with you into the bath. It will light your way in the darkness." He gave her the star and as she took it, it shrunk down to the size of a pebble. It felt warm, but not hot. She closed her hand around it and hugged the detective.

"Thank you, dad. Thank you, Mike." she said quietly. The detective hugged her. She then kissed Mike's cheek and hugged him, who kissed and hugged back. The detective pulled a towel out from his inner coat pocket as Mike took her jacket off.

"Ready?" Mike asked. She nodded as he then lead her by the hand to the bath with the detective following with the towel and jacket.

"Hey Elle?" Nancy asked, Elle turning toward her. "If you can, can you also try and find Barb, please?" Elle nodded as Dustin gave her duct taped goggles which he helped put on her. Joyce and Nancy helped her into the bath, and they all watched as she floated there, immersing into what Dustin called "the mindscape."

37. Chapter 37: The Mindscape

It felt...cold, and dark. There was nothing in that place. No light, no anything. Just a black, empty void. Elle didn't like going into "the mindscape", as it was where she first found and MET the Demogorgon, but if it meant finding Mike's friend and Nancy's friend as well, she had to. She wanted to. She looked in her hand and found that the sun stone was there. It comforted her, with its bright light. Using it to light her way, she walked around, looking for Barb. The ground left ripples as she walked, like water. She then saw something...disgusting and infested. As she walked over, she was horrified when she saw who she believed was Barb. Back in reality, she was hyperventilating out of fear, calling out for Mike and Enigma. When she heard the familiar voices of Joyce and Mike, she relaxed. Back in the mindscape, she saw a fog cloud, and a shadow faded in the midst of it. The mutilated, infested Barb was now gone, and she stepped back away from the fog cloud as the shadow approached, fearing that she attracted the Demogorgon. As the shadow stepped out, she found a familiar man with a black trench coat standing there.

"...dad?" She said. The figure was tall and towering, but when she shined the sun-stone at it, she could make out her dad standing there, looking around the place. He was...astonished. He'd been to many places in his life, but not once had he been to a place where there was literally nothing. When he saw and heard Elle however, he smiled, glad to see that she was ok.

"Hey, kiddo. I said I'd be there when you called for me, and here I am. " She looked at him confused as to how he got here. In reality, the detective lie suspended in midair, completely unconscious, with Hopper and Jonathan sitting by him. "I'll explain later. So you found Barb, eh?" She nodded, looking down. "Hey," the detective said as he knelt down, lifting her chin up gently, "there was nothin more you coulda done. You did what you could, and at the end of the day, that's all that matters." She wiped her eyes and smiled. Standing back up, the detective said, "Come on, let's find Will and get out of this place. It's starting to creep me out a little." She nodded, chuckling and took the detective's hand and used the stone to light the way. *I*

can't stay here long. As soon as we find Joyce's kid, I have to leave. If not, I'll probably die. The detective thought to himself as he walked with Elle. Not long after, they found a small fort made of sticks and branches with a cloth sign on it that read, "Castle Byers". The detective tried to activate his eyes, but when he did, he screamed in pain and fell to his knees with his hands around his eyes.

"Dad!" Elle ran over to him. When he opened his eyes, they weren't there, even though he could still see. Elle jumped back, scared when she looked into the detective's black voids for eyes.

"Honey, it's ok. It's ok, dad just isn't used to this place yet. He wasn't made for this. It's ok, honey, it's ok. It's still dad." he said gently, reaching towards her. He then reverted his eyes, which stung at first, but as they returned, it became bearable. "See?" He asked as he opened his normal, brown eyes. "Nothing to worry about." Elle sighed in relief and hugged his arm. He instead reaches for his gun, which wasn't there either. Only a small cloud of smoke came out. *Great, already starting to fade from this place.* He reached for the curtain while Elle hid behind his back and looked over his shoulder as he did. As he slowly opened the curtain, he could see the weak, sick, and cold figure of Will Byers. Elle gasped and rushed to his side.

"Will..." He looked up at her when she talked, then the detective began,

"Help's on the way kid. Just hang in there, alright?" Will weakly nodded as the tent dissipated into smoke.

"Will? WILL?!" Elle yelled as the tent faded away. At that moment the detective began to slowly turn into smoke himself. "Dad?!"

"It's ok, honey. I've got to go. I'll be there when you wake up, ok?" the detective said reassuringly, as his form began to fade into smoke and he put his hand on her cheek. "We'll tell them what we saw."

"O...ok." she said, holding his hand and tearing up. Just before the detective completely disappeared, he kissed her on the forehead and faded away like the fog he used to come there. Elle shot up and tore the goggles off her head, with some blood running from her nose and tears forming in her eyes, hyperventilating a little. Mike and Nancy

hugged her close and comforted her as she worriedly looked over at the suspended detective, who fell to the ground with a *thud*. Hopper and Jonathan rushed over to help him to his feet, but when he woke up he hyperventilating himself for a moment or two. As they helped him up, he switched to his blue eyes to see how much energy he'd used. *Lovely, reduced to candle lights. Thankfully, my recharge doesn't take too long. My energy levels should be back to normal in at least an hour or so.* As Hopper and Jonathan helped him into a chair, Elle slowly stepped out of the bath with Nancy helping her and Mike wrapping her in a towel. She then hugged the slightly tired detective as he reverted his eyes back to normal. "Thank you for being there with me, dad." the detective looked down at her and smiled. He hugged her back, rubbing her head.

"You're welcome, honey." Nancy then tugged the detective's sleeve. He looked up at her and said, "What's up, Nans?" while setting Elle on his lap and pulling the edges of his coat around her, as he could feel her shiver a little.

"Did you find Barb?" Enigma's eyes widened and his smile vanished into a grim look. He looked down at Elle, who gave him the same look.

"Uh...um...she uh...I'm so sorry, Nancy." he said as he put his hand on her shoulder. The detective tried to think of the best way to tell her, but how do you tell someone that their friend was mutilated and infested with fungus and worms? Elle started to cry a little when she thought of Barb. The detective hugged her and kissed her saying, "Hey, it's ok. There was nothing more that you coulda done. You found her, that's all that matters." He looked up at Nancy who was starting to tear up.

"Oh," she sniffled, wiping her eyes, "don't worry. Like your dad said, you did the best you could." Jonathan walked over to her and as he sat next to her, she put her face into his shoulder. "It's my fault she's dead. I just HAD to tell her to leave that night." He hugged her back as she silently wept over the loss of her friend into his shoulder. Jonathan rubbed her back, saying, "Shhh...it wasn't your fault. Neither of us except Elle, knew about that monster. It couldn't have been your fault." and leaning his head against hers.

"He tells the truth, Nancy. Elle was the only one who did, but she didn't know it would attack outside of that dimension." the detective said, calmly and gently.

"What about Will? Is he?" Joyce piped up, tears forming in her eyes. The detective looked over at her and immediately Elle said,

"Will is...alive." Elle said, wiping her eyes on the detective's jacket.

"Oh thank God. Where is he?" she sighed, wiping her eyes herself.

"Upside Down in Castle Byers." Elle replied. The detective thought for a second but just then Hopper got up to leave. Enigma yelled,

"Jim, where are you going?" with urgency in his voice.

"To get Will back. I think I know where the main gate is." Enigma gently got up and set Elle in his chair and ran over to the chief of Hawkins police.

"No, not you. Let me. I have a better chance of surviving in that place than anyone else here." Hopper turned and looked at the lanky man who stood eye to eye with him. He looked at Elle, who was watching them talk.

"That little girl," he said, nodding towards Elle, "she really loves you. I had a little girl once...and she left me sooner than I thought she would. Sooner than I wanted her to. You just met this girl, and she already thinks of you as her dad. Don't leave her like my daughter left me." He then walked away with the detective standing there watching him leave. Joyce and Jonathan got up and left too, but was stopped by the detective.

"No, Joyce, I can't let either of you go to that place. It had death written all over it." the detective said solemnly.

"And what? Sit around and wait for my little boy to die? I'm going in there whether you and Hopper like it or not." she said, looking at the detective angrily. Just as Jonathan was about to follow, she stopped him saying, "Honey, stay here with the others please. I'll be right back."

"No, I want to help you find Will." Jonathan said, objecting to the idea of staying behind.

"No, I've already lost one of my boys. I won't lose another." she as she turned to hear Hopper yelling for her. "I'll be right back, Jonathan. I promise." she added, kissing his cheek before heading out the door with Hopper. Nancy got up and left the gym too, not going far from it. Jonathan followed her to see where she was going. Enigma sighed, and walked back over with the kids, putting his jacket around Elle, who was shivering still with a towel around her. He then took his gun out and made sure it was loaded in case someone unwelcome came. *What do they think they're doing?* he thought to himself as he sat there with the kids, knowing that they would need the most protection.

38. Chapter 38: The Man Behind Everything

The detective waited and waited...and waited. He had the gun in his hand as he scanned the doors and listened in case someone or something came. Just then, he heard a car drive off away from the school. *Nancy and Jonathan. Great. Way to desert me...us, guys.* the detective thought to himself, a little annoyed. Elle was resting her head on Mike's shoulder, wrapped in a towel and the detective's coat, holding his hand. Lucas and Dustin sat next to Mike while the detective sat next to the bath, activating his eyes every now and then to see how much energy he had. After a little while, Dustin got up and left saying,

"I'll be right back." as he walked out of the gym.

"Where ya off to, Dustin?" the detective asked.

"Fuel cells depleted. Lunch lady's got a whole stock pile of chocolate pudding hidden in the kitchen. I'll be right back." Lucas soon followed. *Cheap pudding. Huh, actually that doesn't sound half bad right about now.*

"Alright, just stay together." the detective said as he heard them yell back, "Ok." Elle then piped up,

"Pudding?" she asked in a small voice.

"Yeah, it's sweet brown goop that you eat with a spoon." Elle looked at Mike with a surprised look on her face. "It's actually really good, trust me. It's like really thick ice cream, except it isn't cold." She nodded in understanding, wrapping her arms around him, glad they were now alone, with the exception of the detective who didn't really care.

"Thank you, Mike. For everything you've done for me." Mike smiled and hugged her back, their cheeks reddening.

"You're welcome, Elle." he said, kissing her forehead, which caused them to blush even more so. The detective looked over and smiled. However, it didn't last. He heard multiple tires screeching outside.

Knowing who had come brought back all of the painful memories that the detective had experienced. *Brenner*. How did they know they were there? The detective knew he destroyed that helicopter, or maybe they hacked into the school's security cameras. Either way, he activated his eyes, which were flowing with blue energy. *Well, at least my energy levels are back to normal. Now I can fight without having to worry about any real restraints.* He abruptly got up and motioned Mike and Elle that they had to leave. NOW. "What's going on?" Mike asked as he grabbed his coat.

"Bad men...papa are coming." Elle said, sounding scared. The detective nodded as she gave him his coat.

"There's your answer. Come on, we gotta grab Dustin and Lucas and we gotta leave before they catch us." Just then, they came rushing into the gym. "They're inside already?" They nodded frantically. The detective got up and reverted his eyes. *Gotta save it for later.* He pulled out his gun and ran with the kids down the hallway of the school when they were stopped by guards, soldiers, *and Connie*, who had guns pointed at them. Elle focused very hard while the detective's eyes activated and he raised his hand upwards and created a protective field around him and the kids. Blood soon slowly dripped out of the offenders' eyes and ears as Elle concentrated. Next thing they knew, they fell to the floor, their eyes dripping with blood. Elle then collapsed into Mike's arms, looking dizzy.

"Elle! Are you ok?!" he asked, holding her up. She looked at him with blood coming down her nose and nodded, her eyes fluttering a little. Once the field was complete, the detective put his hand down and knelt down, rubbing her head with his hand. Just then he saw her weak smile turn into a wide-eyed look of terror as she turned to see him.

"What's wrong, honey?" As he turned around, the field slowly turned red as he stood up. It cackled with electricity and scorched where the edges touched. There before him stood the one man he hated more than life itself. He closed his eyes, and opened them to reveal red-orange stars flaring against the voids that his eyes once were. These red "star-eyes" made the men step back as he walked out of the field towards them. "Martin Brenner..." he growled.

39. Chapter 39: Letting it Go

Brenner just look at at him, wondering how he knew his name when they've never met before. "Oh, so you don't remember me, do you? Maybe this will jog your memory!" Enigma yelled as he pulled up his left sleeve to reveal 002 to Brenner, whose eyes widened in horror. It was one of the rogue assets, but what scared him the most was that he thought he got killed in the explosion.

"So, you've been alive after all these years have you?" he asked, stepping back.

"Yeah, and I've grown stronger. A LOT stronger. It's been 13 years since you killed One, and I've been looking for you. Oh I've been looking alright. I'm surprised someone like YOU survived that blast which decimated the building."

"I'm surprised you survived that myself, 002-"

"My name is not A NUMBER!" The detective's eyes flared brighter.

"Kill him!" he ordered the men, but just as they aimed their weapons, several red little star-like projectiles appeared around the detective. With a snap of his fingers, they rushed towards the soldiers and killed them by impaling them and detonating, leaving nothing behind. As Brenner was pressed against the wall with an angry asset before him, he called out to who he thought was his little girl. "Eleven! Get this man to stop attacking papa!" Elle just looked ahead, looking a little scared and clinging to Mike. The way the detective acted terrified her; but what scared her the most was the way everything was tinted from her point of view inside the shield. She was more comfortable when the detective casted one of his light blue energy shields; it made everything look calmer and made her relax, even when the monster attacked, but this new red shield made everything look...evil, and disgusting. She clung tighter to Mike saying quietly,

"No, bad papa. With new dad now, not you."

"My name is Enigma Silverstein, and I WILL make you PAY for what YOU did to ONE! AND FOR WHAT YOU DID TO MY LITTLE GIRL!"

the detective yelled vengefully, slamming Brenner into the wall headfirst.

"Dad!" yelled Eleven, running to the edge of the shield.

"I've been waiting for years for this exact moment," he said in a dark tone. He then laughed sadistically as his face turned into a wide-eyed, crooked smile and the dazed old doctor looked back at him with fear in his eyes. "Aw, look at you. You look the same way Eleven did when I first met her. Karma's a bitch, ain't it, bastard?"

"DAD!" Eleven yelled louder and even slammed her hands against the shield, with tears streaming down her eyes. The boys joined in screaming, "ENIGMA! STOP!", but it wasn't enough. Enigma was too wound up in revenge and rage to even listen to her. Then his hand flattened out and cackled with electricity, as it surrounded his hand. The strong plasma sort of solidified, like his platforms, only it had to sharp edges and a sharpened point. Dustin sure as hell wasn't in awe at this energy sword. Red fire and electricity surrounded it with sparks flying off of it. As Brenner tried to get away, the detective grabbed him by the throat and slammed him back into the wall with his other hand, choking him. Brenner tried to break his hand off, but it was no use. The grip was like the strength of ten bear traps in one single hand.

"What's the matter, doc? You've got an appointment with justice. I think it's a surgery." He leaned in close, his smile and eyes widening with more red flames pouring out with sparks of electricity following. "A heart surgery. There appears to be something infecting it. Something black and dark. Heck, I'll even show you before you die just how it looks. And there's a 100% chance that it will. Be. A. SUCCESS!" he said, tightening his grip on his neck and raising the energy blade, ready to claim his vengeance. Just before he could plunge the blade right into his heart, he froze, and was thrown into the ceiling, the floor, and then into the walls, making huge holes from the impacts. Brenner fell to the ground, holding his neck and gasping for air on his knees.

"Thank you Ele-" he started out but was thrown to the right, away from the detective. Elle fell into Mike's arms again, weak from stopping the detective from unnecessary violence. As much as she

hated Brenner, killing him would make the detective no better. Blood was dripping from her ear and her nose, and tears and squeaks came out of her. She hugged Mike, tight as she could, nearly falling but was hugged back and held up by him.

"Oh, dad. I'm sorry." Elle said between squeaks and small sobs. The boys stepped back against the field when they saw the detective standing there, his eyes flaring with red sparks and fire, staring down at them. Staring down at Elle with those flaring red eyes in the red "protective" field, and she looked back up at him, scared. She was scared of him, but she knew that deep down was her dad. He picked her up with his hands. Mike and the boys tried to get her away from him, but no luck. As she was held eye-level with the seemingly enraged detective, she pleaded with him while crying, saying, "Dad...I'm sorry." looking submissive like she did last night, when he first fought with the monster. She wiped her eyes, nose, and ear. He just stared back with his flaming eyes, closing them tightly, doing his best not to hurt her. His head began to fidget and shake, his teeth bared and flames pouring out of his closed eyelids, his arms shake and tending up trying not to squeeze her, muttering to himself. *She got in the way...No, she was just trying to help us...We were SO CLOSE!...If we killed him then we would be no better than he ever was!...I DON'T CARE! What ever happened to avenging One?!...What does it matter? If she'd dead, then killing him won't bring her back...Maybe so, but if we kill him than we can stop the experiments...That's why there's a court system, for this kind of stuff. We bring him into Federal court and let them decide what to do from there. Come on, it's the right thing to do. Let's let go of our hatred and move on. If we give into it, we'll be consumed by it. One didn't sacrifice herself for this, for vengeance. This in no way is what she would've wanted. She sacrificed herself so that we could live a happy life.*

The detective relaxed, stopped muttering and baring his teeth, and red flames stopped flowing out of them. The field then slowly wiped into that light blue color, and he opened his real eyes, and tears flowed out of them when he saw Elle. He hugged her close, and kissed her forehead.

"Oh, honey...I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to scare you like that. I'll never do it again." he said in between sobs. He dropped to his knees,

sobbing still, rocking back and forth. Elle wrapped her arms and legs around him the tightest she could despite being exhausted. "Never, ever, ever again." he said, crying profusely as did Elle. Mike teared up a little and started to cry himself, seeing them like this. He walked over and hugged the detective, the other boys joining in. "Guys, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to...I shouldn't have...I don't know why..." he said, wrapping his arms around them all, crying harder as he did. A song started playing in his head with a music box-esq tune. *You are my sunshine. My only sunshine. You make me happy, when skies are gray. You'll never know, dear. How much I love you. Please don't take my sunshine awaaaay.* It was a feminine voice. Beautiful and smooth, yet familiar. *That song...that was...that was One's favorite song.* "Thanks a lot, guys. For helping me out." he said, straightening out and wiping his eyes and nose. Dustin and Lucas nodded, wiping their eyes themselves. He tussled Mike's hair and kissed Elle's forehead.

Just then the lights flickered, and there was a scream behind them. They quickly turned to see the monster dragging away Brenner. Instantly, the detective got up, saying,

"RUN!" while picking up Elle and ushering the boys to run. More soldiers went in, guns blazing at the monster as it devoured Brenner. They made it to the boys' classroom, and Enigma set Elle lying down on the table gently. He looked back and decided, *There's no other option. My blue eyes aren't enough.* Soon, red flames and sparks poured out from his eyes once more as he ran out the door.

40. Chapter 40: Struggle of a Flipping Coin

Mike was at Elle's side the whole time. They heard yelling, screaming, explosions, gunfire, growling, and roaring. Just then, the monster flew through the room, bashing down the door with the enraged detective's flaming fist in its stomach. He punched and kicked it furiously, leaving the monster no time to counter. The monster let out an earsplitting screech only to be interrupted by the detective roaring back and tearing off part of its mouth. It screamed in pain, causing the kids to kneel down, covering their ears. Then the detective punched it, shutting it up and rammed in through the wall, taking the fight outside. The monster got up, bleeding some kind of black blood as it did. The boys rushed out of there, carrying Elle. Dustin was in complete awe when he saw the detective fight the monster. It picked him up and threw him away with its good long arm, only for him to reroute his momentum into the creature's scorched side of the face, sending it flying. It dug its claws into the ground, slowing it down. The struggle between the two was like that of a coin flipping in midair, no one knowing which side would end up on top.

The detective was bleeding from his arm and face, but he didn't care, while the Demogorgon was missing part of its face, burnt part of its face, a scorched hand, and a broken arm. They stared each other down, growling at each other. Then the creature lunged at him, good claw outstretched, only to miss, but it smacked him right in the chest at incredible force, causing him to cough up blood. It then picked him up by his bleeding arm and slammed him into the ground still holding it and breaking it in the process. He screamed in immense agony and pain. Just as it was about to land the killing blow, it was thrown away, tumbling around as it fell. As the detective's eyes reverted back to normal and began to close, he smiled at Elle, who had blood vessels popped in her eyes and teared up as she saw him nearly dying in the grass. He closed his eyes, and went limp. The enraged monster walked towards the children, stepping over the seemingly dead body of the fallen detective. Elle fainted out of exhaustion and wouldn't wake up after attempting in vain to help her dad. The boys then pulled out their wrist rocket from Mike's bag and tried using that, which did nothing at all. The stones they used

bounced off of it one after another, having no effect on it at all. As it closed in with Mike, Dustin, and Lucas who circled around Elle, something appeared from behind the beast.

It had glowing purple fire streaming upward from its face and grabbed it by the shoulder, slamming it into the ground. The detective was alive. He pick it up and punted it a ways away from them, landing hard onto the ground. As it got up, the detective closed his eyes and focused very hard. Soon, the air around him turned into purple energy and swirled around him, levitating him in the air. Then in an echoing voice, he spoke.

"Mike. Take care of Elle for me. I'll be back, I promise. Wait and be patient, for I WILL return." Mike watched as the detective zoomed towards the staggering monster like a purple comet, reaching out and yelling,

"Enigma! NO!" Elle saw this through her slightly closed eyes and weakly said,

"Dad...No..." before weakly hugging Mike, who hugged back. The detective was accelerating and going at incredible speeds for a human, his feet barely touching the ground. As he made contact with the monster, the monster seemed to dissolve, and the detective with it. Soon, all that was left of the detective were a few purple flames that disappeared in the air and a scorched trail from where he flew. As Elle was brought over by the boys to the ambulances, fire engines, and police cars that had arrived, Mike's mom Karen hugged her son. Elle introduced herself with Mike's help holding her up. She kept holding Mike and started tearing up, fearing what came of her new dad.

"I miss him too, Elle. Don't worry, he'll be back. He promised." Mike said, comforting the poor girl, kissing her cheek.

"He did...most ideal thing. Protected us...and fought the monster," she replied in between squeaks and sniffles. Mike nodded and held her close, rubbing her back.

41. Chapter 41: Heads or Tails?

"DAMN YOU!" Yelled the ever-angry detective, throwing the monster into the ground. He then broke its other arm effortlessly. It screamed in pain only for the detective to rip its tongue out in blind fury.

"Fuck you! You have no right TO EXPRESS PAIN! ESPECIALLY NOT AFTER WHAT YOU DID, YOU WRETCHED, SOULLESS BEAST!" He then clobbered it and caused it to fall flat on its back, purple flames began pouring out of his hands and eyes. Its legs couldn't reach him and it couldn't slash at him because both arms were snapped. The detective was full force enraged, and he activated his energy blade from his hand, now the color of purple, and slowly cut into its gray slimy skin. It screeched in pain, but to no avail. He wanted it to hurt just as bad as it hurt him. By this point, all reason had left the detective's head and was replaced with one, singular goal: Kill. The. Monster.

"You've caused my daughter and her friends so much pain and trouble. You don't deserve to live." he said as in one smooth and quick motion, he sliced off its arm. It twitched for a moment, then stopped moving. The screeching didn't bother the detective, no matter how loud it was. He didn't care. He made the blade melt back into flames and didn't care about anything. He watched as it got up, and tried to get away, but it stumbled as it lost too much "blood", falling on where it's arm was.

"Just shut up already." the detective then said, mounting it again. It squirmed and wriggled, trying desperately to get away. Again, no use.

"Every day you stress out Joyce and every day she gets crazier. Every night, you terrorize Will Byers in this place for no reason. You hurt only who gets in your way. Well guess what? You're in MY way. And I hate ANYONE OR THING that gets in my way, as well. Well what do you know, we have something in common. Only thing is, I don't kill them. However, in your case, I'll make an exception." The detective punched the monster, over and over again. Each punch caused the trees to shake and the ground where he punched the monster cracked as the monster got its punishment. It struggled to

slash it with its other arm, only to have it ripped off by the crazed, merciless detective.

"You are a threat to every living human. You are the nightmare of every person who can't sleep at night because they're afraid of the dark void in their closet or underneath their beds. The ultimate abomination. So then, what am I? I'll tell you what I am. I am the man who cleanses the world of monstrosities like you." he said between every destructive punch that he threw. The monster soon coughed up black blood with each punches, but the detective kept going, giving it no rest. He then got up after feeling it struggle less and less. As he stood over the Demogorgon, it was too weak to lift its head or even close its tattered flower-like mouth. Its teeth were all over the place, in a puddle of monster blood. The detective then closed his hand, concentrating his energy into it. Rays of light came from the cracks in between his fingers. He then raised it toward the monster, opening it.

"See you in hell." he said, releasing a massive beam of purple energy. It incinerated the ground and nearby trees. When he stopped firing the energy beam, all he saw was its charred, smoking, disembodied head black and missing parts of its mouth. He then reverted back to his own eyes and collapsed, breathing slowly and heavily. The last thing he saw was Hopper carrying a boy's body and Joyce running over in hazmat suits before blacking out.

...

Everybody was at the hospital in the waiting room. Will was ok and was able to go home after meeting up with his friends, mom, and older brother. They were all happy for a moment that it was over. Even Elle was glad to see that Will was alive. However, after another hour or two passed, a doctor came out and everyone was on the edge of their seats. He simply waved his hand saying,

"Come with me." They then followed the doctor into a room to find the detective in horrible shape. The monitor showing his heartbeat that was beeping very slow, only showing a pulse every few seconds. Elle ran to his side hugging and kissing him, crying as he gave no response whatsoever. She felt his slow heavy breathing and shook him, trying desperately to wake him up. Hopper then spoke up.

"What is his situation?" he asked the doctor. The doctor then read off to him the list of what the detective was suffering from.

"Gashes on his face, scarred and badly bruised hands, a broken arm, strained legs, mildly infected lungs, snapped ribs, deep gashes in the calves and chest, and teeth lodged in his hands and arms. The fact that he's still alive is incredible on its own. I'm not sure for how much longer though. Whatever happened in what he was involved in, we don't know exactly if he will survive, but we estimate that the chances of him surviving are...slim."

"Damn." the chief said out loud looking at the detective. He was covered in bandages and had a cast on one of his arms.

"Dad. Dad!" Elle kept saying, nearly shouting in tears trying to get him to wake up. Eventually Mike tried to help as well. Even he was in tears, as were Nancy and Joyce who tried to get them away from the detective. No response. Just slow, steady breathing.

42. Chapter 42: One?

...Ugh, where am I? Agh, why is it so bright in here? The detective got up, covering and squinting his eyes. The "place" he was in was completely white. Whiter than snow. Am I...dead?

He felt himself. He was still in his trench coat and clothes. His gun was still there. So where was he? *This can't be the mindscape. I wouldn't have my gun in there. I don't even have access to that place without Elle.* He then turned around and saw a door. A tall, black door with black smoke coming from the bottom of it. As he walked toward it, green healthy vines wrapped around it, keeping it closed. *The hell?* He then heard footsteps behind him. He whirled around to see someone in the distance he'd never seen before. She had long brown hair, at least two heads shorter than he was, bright green eyes, a small nose, and a small smile. She was wearing a hospital gown and no shoes or socks. He recognized her immediately.

"One..." he said, running over to her, away from the door. "I've been looking for you for a long time. I didn't know where to find you." He then knelt down and hugged her close. And she hugged back.

"I know, Two. I know." she said comforting him, rubbing his back.

"I haven't been able to sleep for years. Then I meet this little girl, and now...well. I'm just glad to see you again." he replied, wiping his eyes.

"So am I, Two, but you can't stay here."

"I'm not leaving you," he said, standing up, "I've just found you after ALL this time. I can't leave you, not now, not ever!" He then put his back to her and let his head hang.

"Two, come on! Listen to yourself! The only way for you to be with me is if you die as well, and you've made all of these great friends and you just want to throw that all away?!" He was silent when she said this. She put her hand on his shoulder. "I died so that you could live a happy life."

"Oh? And you think having nightmares about those experiments and losing you is a happy life? Ha! Hardly what I call a happy life." he said a little annoyed.

"Of course not, but you could be right now. That little girl, Elle, adores you. She thinks of you as a father, a true father at that. If you died, even with Mike, she'd be miserable for the rest of her life. Do you really want that?" Again, no answer. Wiping his eyes again, he said.

"No, I don't." He hugged her again, picking her up off the ground a little. "I just don't want to lose you again." She kissed his cheek and hugged him back, running her fingers through his jagged hair.

"I know, I know. You can't throw this away, Two. LIVE life. You've been wasting your time looking for me instead of enjoying life. I gave you the nightmares-"

"YOU gave me the nightmares?!"

"Only to get you to let me go and move on! Besides, I never left."

"How can I forget about you? How can I let you go?! And what do you mean you NEVER left!?"

"Do you know that forest you go to when you're stressed out on the job? You know how you are at peace almost the instant you get there? Why it's so beautiful in Spring and Summer?"

"Yeah, what about it?" She then took hold of his hand, a tear rolling down her cheek.

"That was me...comforting you. When they buried me in the ground, my consciousness merged with the plant life around it. I never left you, you just couldn't see me." The detective wiped the tear off her face, looking at her eye to eye.

"So I've been looking for you, and all this time you've been right under my foot?"

"In a way, yeah." She said, putting her hand on his face, with him holding it there. *Her hands...they're so much smaller than mine.*

"I'm sorry, for getting mad. I guess...I was...always good at that." She smiled, kissing his forehead.

"Who would you be if you weren't?" she said, chuckling a little.

Just then he heard the cries and screams of Elle and Mike, with Joyce, Nancy, and doctors as well trying to pry them away, as well as a monotonous long beep. He looked back at One, who was slowly fading into the light. He teared up and as she was fading, the detective kissed her on the lips for the first time. She kissed back, and they hugged again. Tears fell down the detective's face after facing the reality that he would never see One again, and tears slowly went down One's face as she faded. "I love you, One." he said kissing her cheek. Soon, his arms weren't holding her anymore, and he looked up to see her floating away.

"I love you too, Enigma. Do you know what name I would've wanted after we escaped?" she said, floating away from his arms like a ghost, towards the sky.

"What? What name is that?" he asked, sobbing and sniffing. Just then, a water lily descended from above and he gently caught it in his hands. He looked down at it and back up to see One smiling and waving at him one last time, tears coming down her eyes. "Goodbye...Lily. I'll never forget you...my friend." he said, waving back with the water lily in his other hand. He wiped his eyes and nose and turned around to see that the black door was gone and was instead replaced with a white door. As he opened it and walked through, the land behind him disappeared as he fell into darkness...

43. Chapter 43: I'm back as promised

"NO LEAVE ME WITH DAD! WAKE UP!" Elle was yelling as Joyce was pulling her away, both with tears. Nancy was pulling Mike away and they were crying too.

"Mike, stop there's no point!" Nancy said through tears, trying desperately to get Mike away.

"Let go, doofus! I have to try! He said he'd be back! He promised!" Mike yelled shakily. Hopper and Jonathan eventually helped out, but just as they did, they heard a beeping sound. The monitor. It was showing waves in a steady pace. Everyone stopped and watched it.

"The hell?" Hopper muttered as he stared at the screen. The detective then yelled in pain.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAHH! NNNGGGHHH!" He squirmed as blue fire spewed out of his tightly closed eyelids. The pain that shot through his body. It was unbearable at first, but he soon stopped screaming and growling and began to hyperventilate, wincing every now and then.

"DAD!" Elle yelled, but Joyce and Jonathan kept her back. Just as doctors and guards rushed in, he stabilized and his breathing was back to normal. He kept wincing and his eyes closed tightly, the pain still shooting through his body. The doctors then administered painkillers, which soothed the pain a bit for the detective and causing him to briefly pass out. After a few minutes, the detective stirred a bit.

"...mmmmuuuuuuhhh...huuuuh?" he mumbled. Everyone, including the doctors and Will watched in amazement. "How is this guy alive?" the doctors asked among themselves. The detective's eyes slowly opened, little by little. Everyone was staring at him, he was glad though just slightly unnerved. "Hey guys...I'm...not dead...Not yet...at least." he said groggily, smiling a little and laughing a little then coughing. "Nngghh oh god...Hurts to...laugh." Tears fell from the faces of the nurses, Nancy, Joyce, Mike, and especially Elle. With the help of Hopper, he sat up, wincing at the pain from his shattered ribs.

"Thanks Jim."

"No problem, pal." Hopper said, smirking and shaking his hand. Soon Nancy and Joyce hugged him, shocking him a little, but he smiled and hugged back the best he could. Jonathan reluctantly joined in, and the detective patted his shoulder as he did. Then the boys except Will group hugged him and he shook Will's hand, smiling at him. When he looked at Elle, however, she looked angry with tears streaming down her eyes. She ran at him, jumping on him and banged her fists against his chest.

"Mouth breather! Stupid mouth breather!" she yelled as she cried and banged her fists against his chest. It caused little pain and it didn't bother the detective one bit. He was just glad to see her again. She slowed down and cried profusely burying her face into his chest. "Oh, dad..." He hugged her and held her a little bit like a baby in his good arm, kissing her cheeks and forehead and wiping her face with his bad arm while he teared up. Tears fell like rain drops down his face. Then he rocked her back and forth as she cried, singing in a deep shaky voice,

"You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. You make me happy when skies are gray. You'll never know...dear," she looked up at him, leaning against his chest, wiping her eyes and nose on his gown. He smiled back, sniffing as he continued, "how much I...love you. Please don't take my sunshine...awaaaayy." She then got up and hugged him, kissing his cheek.

"I love you, dad." she said, sniffing and squeaking a little. He kissed and hugged her as well, rubbing her back with his bad arm, sobbing a little himself.

"I love you too, honey. More than life itself. I love you so much." he said in between sniffles, leaning his head against hers. "You know something, kiddo?"

"Yeah?" she asked, wiping her eyes on his gown.

"When One and I were...in the bad place, she would always sing that song after she heard it on a radio in her room. Whenever she sang, it was the prettiest thing I've ever heard. I can still hear her sing it to

this day. I'm no singer, but I wanted you to hear it because I thought you might like it." She kissed him again saying,

"Thank you, dad." Nancy and Joyce cried happily as they watched this. Mike, crying himself, was hoisted up by the detective and hugged by him in his bad arm, wincing a little and tussling his hair. "Hey, relax. Enough of the tears. Let's all go home. I'm done being in this place." As he got up he winced, "Nnnngghh! Don't worry, I'm fine." he said as Elle and Mike grabbed him. He activated his blue eyes, reached out and waved it upward. The cloud of particles swirled and condensed into a sort of floating chair rather than a platform. He slowly moved himself into the chair and started to float out of there, but was stopped by the doctors.

"Sir, you're scheduled for surgery on your arm and ribs tonight. Not to mention the minor infection in your lungs tomorrow morning. I'm afraid we can't even discuss you going home until...at least 2-3 weeks after today." read off one of them. The detective irritably sighed, and reluctantly got back in bed.

"...So be it. Sorry guys, but looks like I'll be stuck here, rotting for a little bit." He looked down in disappointment, but Elle and Mike hugged him with Jonathan and Hopper patting his shoulders.

"We'll be waiting then. We'll let the kids visit every day." Joyce insisted.

"Don't worry. This few weeks will be a breeze, almost like it never happened." Hopper added. The detective then smiled with one eye closed.

"Heh, thanks guys, I appreciate you guys just being here with me. This is gonna be a long 2-3 weeks though, I'll tell you that much, no matter what you guys say. And these operations should hopefully be fast, I'll just be walking around with metal in my bones for a little bit. As for the infection, I'm a little scared. I know Will made it out alright and that I'm the GREAT detective, especially with his prolonged stay in that horrible place. Just...nervous is all." he said, laughing nervously. Elle held his hand comfortingly, and he rubbed her head in response, smiling at her. "Thanks honey. Alright, I know it's Saturday, but you kids should be running off home to sleep, get

some well-deserved rest. Don't worry about me, you'll see me tomorrow no doubt. Mike, Nancy, take care of Elle for me alright? You should still have her clothes from earlier today." Nancy hugged him and pecked his cheek, causing him to furrow his brow. "Hey, what was that for?"

"For being so nice and helpful to us." she said, standing up smiling. The detective scoffed and smirked back, holding her hand briefly.

"Hey, anything for a friend. Hey Mikey, when is this...snowball?" he said, winking at him. Mike punched him in his arm, blushing a little.

"D-december 18th, why?" Mike asked, a little annoyed. The detective chuckled and tousled his hair saying,

"Relax, buddy. I'm askin' because rather than have your dad take you tux shopping, I'm gonna take you." He then winked at Nancy, who understood, looking down at Elle.

"You? Tch. What would you know about tux shopping?"

"Kid, I know EVERYTHING about fashion, solely from observation. Trust me." he said, leaning into Mike and wrapping his arm around him, smiling and tapping his head with his finger. "Don't you worry, good old Enigma's gonna do you good with a grand tux that'll make your date fall for you INSTANTLY." he added in a gangster's accent just because he could. Mike gave him a weird look and the detective just laughed, tussling his hair.

They then said their goodbyes, hugging the detective one last time for the night. Elle refused to move for a couple moments before finally the detective convinced her to leave by saying that she would see him tomorrow in the morning, also Mike said that he had eggos at his house that she could eat. After they left, the detective reached into his burnt, somewhat tattered coat and pulled out the picture from yesterday, smiling at it. Surprisingly, it was in good condition with the exception of a few wrinkles, but he didn't care. *It's over...finally...it's over.* he thought before falling asleep with the picture in one hand...and a purple water lily in a vase next to him.

44. Chapter 44: Let's go home

Three and a half weeks had gone by very slowly, but the visits made it all worth the while. Everyday, the boys came by to say hi and talk with him for a little bit. They would stay until dinnertime, he even helped them out with his homework. One night, they left him their entire guide book for Dungeons and Dragons for him at request. Whenever he wasn't in an operation, he would read each and every page, studying them carefully. When they came, he would practice being the dungeon master, and he actually caught on pretty quick. On the weekends, they brought Elle and Dungeons and Dragons and played a campaign with him. He would use his powers to make the attacks look realistic, creating harmless holographic fireballs and healing effects, to make the game more enjoyable. Needless to say, the kids loved it and enjoyed their time with him. Elle liked lying in the bed with Enigma, even if it wasn't comfortable.

Sometimes later in the evening, Hopper and Joyce would come by with donuts and coffee and talk about the Upside Down for a little bit, as she was still shaken from the experience and talking with the detective in the room with Hopper as well seemed to help. And if it wasn't Joyce and Hopper, it was Nancy and Jonathan who talked to him about what they've been doing lately, as well as how Elle was doing.

At night, Elle always came, no matter what, carrying her bear with her. For some reason, she liked being the last person he'd see at the end of the day. She'd be walking in the dark room of the detective to find him reading the kids' guidebook. He always greeted her with a smile, a kiss, and a hug. Sometimes, he would let her sleep with him at night, as she would get scared sleeping alone in Mike's basement. Any time spent with her, he always treasured. To get her home in the morning or night, the detective simply made a blue energy platform that carried her and kept her safe on the trip back to Mike's, kissing and hugging her goodbye, and letting it out the window as it flew in the sky. She didn't mind it, as she liked the high view but held on to the disc as she flew in the sky afraid she might fall. When it got to the house, it would hover over by the basement door where she would be waiting for Mike to let her in.

One December afternoon when the boys and Elle came, however, they didn't see the detective in bed. They just saw their guidebook sitting on the bedside table next to a made bed. When they asked the doctor where he was, they simply said that he wasn't there. They picked up their guidebook and left for Mike's house. It was Friday, and they wanted to do a campaign with him. As they went outside to bike home in the light snow, they heard the sound of feet crunching in the dead leaves. When they turned to see what it was, they all were shocked and were yelling in excitement. The detective was there with his eyes activated and three glowing, blue, floating platforms following him. He was wearing a light grey scarf that Nancy gave him two days ago, a dark blue sweater that Joyce stopped by with the day prior, and a brand new dark brown trench coat from Hopper last week. They all ran toward him and jump-hugged him, with him hugging back laughing and holding Elle, who kissed and hugged him, glad that he was out of that place.

"Who wants to fly home?" he asked them, pointing at the platforms. Mike and Elle got on one of them, while Dustin and Lucas just stared in awe at the platforms. As the detective put their bikes on the second platform, he shook the other boys to snap them out of it and they excitedly leaped onto the last platform. The detective smirked as he watched Dustin and Lucas freak out when they got on as he himself sat on the edge of the platform with Elle and Mike. With the wave of his hand, all three platforms ascended into the air.

"THIS IS AWESOME!" Dustin yelled as Lucas held his hands in the air, whooping.

"Where to, Mike?" he asked as the platforms were lifting into the air.

"Let's go to my house! We can have our campaign there!" Mike yelled excitedly, holding Elle's hand and the detective's shoulder.

"To your place it is! Onward!" he proclaimed in a silly, medieval voice. And with a wave of his hand, they zoomed off to have another fantastic campaign of D and D.

45. Chapter 45: I'm Sorry, Will

"There they were, Will the Wise, Dustin the Bard, and Lucas the Brave, in the city of Stormwind seeking information about a rumor about an ancient treasure hidden in a place known as the Black Temple. They asked around the town. They asked the patrons of taverns, local blacksmiths, the scribes, but they either looked at them confused or refused to say anything. Giving up, the three heroes sat down in a tavern and ate." Mike read dramatically. Lucas then slammed his fist on the table, as if to be in character.

"Damn it! Maybe this whole "ancient artifact" thing is just some rumor after all." Dustin patted him on the shoulder, taking a bite out of pizza that the detective ordered not long after they got to the house.

"Come on! Stay positive, old friend! We can't just give up now! We have to stay motivated! Besides, we need that thing in case we run into the Thessalhydra!" Lucas looked at him angrily saying,

"How can I stay motivated when NO ONE IN TOWN KNOWS ABOUT THE MEDALLION OF KARABOR?!"

"Well, look. Will's doing everything he can to find us a way to get to the Black Temple. Speaking of, where IS Will?" asked Dustin, looking around. The others looked around as well. The detective was sitting at the car table with Elle on his lap, Mike next to them, Dustin and Lucas next to Mike, and an empty chair between Lucas and Enigma. Dustin's question was answered with puking noises coming from the bathroom. The detective and Elle got up, with clanking noises coming from the detective's metal arm brace. The detective activated his eyes in case things got hazy, and Elle grabbed his leg with the others following close behind him. The detective reached for the handle and slowly opened the door, creaking coming from the door's hinges.

"Will? Buddy, you alright- oh god." was all the detective said before rushing into Will's side. Will was leaning over the toilet, coughing up...slugs? The kids started to come in, but the detective held his hand up, looking at them sternly, and they stepped back. He looked in the toilet and was horrified; there were at least five wriggling,

unnatural looking slugs or larvae surrounded in thin, slimy residue floating in the toilet water. "Well, better out than in, that's for sure." Enigma then flushed it, and helped Will back into the basement area, with the kids following as Will sat down.

"Guys, I'm fine. Really, I am." he insisted, waving everybody off. Enigma immediately shook his head.

"No, this in NO way is good. Damn doctors! Can't they do anything right?!" he yelled, kicking something over. Then he could hear Will gagging again as he rushed into the bathroom to puke up more slugs. More slugs this time, and if this kept up, he could potentially be in a worse condition. The detective thought for a minute, and sat down. *There must be a goddamn nest in his stomach. Honestly, it wouldn't surprise me, from that f-in worm that's been laying eggs inside of him from that damned dimension. His body is doing its best to defend itself, but he's getting weaker every day. I don't know how much longer it can keep this up before succumbing. The only way to stop it though is if I could...but...it's the only way. Surgery will help, but they'll just keep coming, and coming, and COMING, worsening with every surgery. Will...I'm sorry, but this is the ONLY way this will work.* He then stood up, his head down. "Elle...pin Will to the ground, please." he demanded. Elle looked at him confused, and he replied, "I'm going to fix him," he activated his blue eyes, "trust me, it's the only way." Will walked out, and tripped and was pinned to the ground by Elle.

"WHAT THE HELL?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!" Will screamed, trying desperately to move but to no avail. Elle just stared at him blankly, with tears falling from her face as some blood started to drip from her nose. Dustin and Lucas rushed over yanking at the detective's coat and yelling at Elle, and they ignored the boys.

"WHOA WHOA WHOA Elle what are you DOING?!" Mike yelled at Elle, who looked at him in tears but persisted in holding Will. Then he noticed a tiny blue star in the detective's hand, blue fire streaming from the sides of his face. He tried pushing the detective after realizing what he was going to do. "Get off of him! He'll die if he swallows that!"

"Mike! It's the only way! Surgery won't do anything! I know what I'm doing! Will, buddy. I need you to open your mouth. This will stop the

slugs from coming back, trust me. It's going to burn like a bitch for a little bit though, but it will be worth it." he requested sternly.

"HELL NO!" Will screamed, shutting his mouth tight and shaking his head.

"Then you leave me no choice." the detective said sternly, holding his nose shut. Will squirmed, trying to breathe and eventually gasped for air, giving the detective the right opportunity to get him to swallow the star, and it slid right down his esophagus as he put it in. "Thank you honey. You can let go of him now." Elle released Will, wiping her eyes, nose, and ear a little, sniffing that she just helped the detective force something down his throat. "Honey, I'm sorry I made you do that." he said, picking up Elle but she pushed away and watched as Will yelled in the incinerating pain and doubled over as the star went into his stomach and heated up his insides, burning away what was causing him to puke slugs. Blue rays of light shone out of his mouth during the "cleaning" process, as the detective called it. Dustin and Mike ran to his side, comforting him while Lucas went up and punched the detective in the arm yelling,

"What the SHIT did you do to him?!" rubbing his hand, as he hit him where the detective had his brace. He simply watched Will, with a guilty expression on his face.

"That star was made to 'clean him out'. Something in the Upside Down had laid eggs inside of him, creating a nest of sorts. Since then, he must've been puking up slugs constantly after getting out of that place and receiving treatment from the hospital." he explained. Lucas looked up at him unconvinced, while Dustin, Mike, and Elle began to see where he was going with this. "I know I shouldn't have done that to Will, but I had no other choice. Even if I told him, he would be stubborn and not go through with it. His body has been doing its best to get rid of the parasite, but it's weakening more and more every day. If Elle and I hadn't done this, within a few weeks or even DAYS, his body would've succumbed to the slugs and suffer a condition similar to...Barb. However, THIS will guarantee that he won't have to worry about that OR any further infections. Nothing can survive plasma or at the very least come out unscathed, no matter what it is." As Will relaxed and his breathing stabilized, Mike and Dustin helped him to his feet, still clutching his stomach.

"Ahhh...it burns." More gagging noises came from his mouth as he once more rushed to the bathroom despite the burning sensation in his stomach. Puking sounds could once again be heard from the bathroom, as well as painful noises. As he finished, Will proceeded to rinse his mouth in the sink. Enigma reverted his eyes back to normal and walked into the bathroom brought him to the toilet, and Will stared in shock. The rest of the kids came in to find burnt slugs and eggs and bile in the water, smoke rising from it.

"See what I mean?" the detective asked as he flushed the toilet. Will looked at him still annoyed, but then looked at him with a look of understanding. The detective knelt down to his level and put his hand on his shoulder. "Will, I'm so sorry I put you through with that, but it was for your own good. How do you feel, kid?"

"Still a little burning feeling in my stomach, and I have a godawful taste in my mouth from getting rid of all of that...garbage." he replied, breathing hard. The detective nodded and turned to Mike saying,

"Mikey, quickly, go up stairs and grab a glass of ice water and a bottle of ginger ale if you got it, please." Mike nodded and headed upstairs. He came back with a glass of ice water and a bottle of what looked like ginger ale. The detective took the water from Mike, tussling his hair and giving it to Will, who drank it slowly. He winced with each sip at the feeling of the ice water touching his sensitive stomach nerves, but gulped it down having felt that his stomach had relaxed. The detective then had Mike pour the soda into the glass and gave that to Will. He slowly drank that, glad that the taste in his mouth was mostly gone, but tightened his stomach as the fizz from the soda irritated it a little.

"Thanks, I'm glad you guys are here to help me out." he then said, holding the glass in both hands with his face a little pale.

"Well, I don't know if what I did helped you out as much as it did give you hell, but no problem kid." the detective said, smiling with one eye closed. He then turned to Elle, who gave him an irritated look. He then knelt down to her level, putting his hands on her shoulders saying, "I know, I know, I shouldn't have used you like that, but if I held him myself, I could potentially severely hurt him by

accident. That's why I needed you to do it honey. I'm truly sorry I bossed you around like that and I know I should've asked if you were ok with doing that, but I wasn't thinking clearly and was too focused on "helping" Will." He hugged her, feeling horrible that he basically just used her to torture Will, even if what he believed he helped him. She hugged him back saying,

"It's ok, dad. Not angry with you." She then kissed him on the cheek.

"Heh, thanks honey." he replied, rubbing her head gently. He looked over at Will and got nervous immediately as he did. "Your brother and mother are going to kill me." he said to him nervously chuckling.

"Don't worry about it. They haven't really noticed it anyways. We only have to worry if one of them-" Will was cut off as Jonathan and Nancy came rushing down the stairs. "comes down the stairs. Hey, bro." he finished, sheepishly waving at his older brother. Enigma stepped away from Will as Jonathan ran over to his younger brother. He slowly began to slip away, but stopped as Nancy said,

"Enigma...what happened down here? I heard puking, yelling, and screaming all the way upstairs." she asked, the detective stopping him dead in his tracks. He turned around trying, his best to not look nervous in the slightest bit. "Well, uh, you se-"

"Yeah Enigma, what happened? Nancy sounded a little STRESSED over the phone because she was worried about Will. You alright, Will? How do you feel buddy?" Jonathan asked the detective, a little irritated. The detective paused for a minute, grabbing his arm and looking around the room nervously. *What do I say? What should I tell them? HOW do I tell them?*

46. Chapter 46: Thanks, kid

Just then, Will looked up at him, pale faced but managed a little chuckle.

"Don't be mad at him, Jonathan. I was just feeling a little sick and the guys were freaking out." he said as he got up. The detective just stared at him, confused. *Didn't I just...put that kid through hell? Why didn't he rat out on me? Shit, why didn't ANY of them rat out on me? Well, at least the pain seems to be gone, or at least most of it.* "Enigma was just helping me out as I threw up, made sure that I made it and that it didn't go everywhere. I don't know what it was. Probably just ate something bad or whatever." The detective gave him a look that said, "Thanks kid." He then chimed in, talking a little faster than usual.

"Uh, yeah. Being in that place for so long must've severely weakened his immune system. I honestly wouldn't be surprised if he's had a few stomach bugs, fevers, colds, or all of the over these past few weeks, and there's probably still traces of whatever he picked up from the dimension. However, they seem to be getting better, so that's all that really matters to be honest. I'd recommend him staying home until we're entirely sure that he's ok." Jonathan gave him a suspicious look, and sighed in relief and nodded saying,

"Oh good, I thought something worse happened. Thanks Enigma. Sorry I if I was mad, I was just worried about my little bro." noggging Will, who weakly struggled out of it.

"Stop it Jonathan!" he yelled laughing, but when he coughed everyone immediately fell silent. Jonathan then picked him up and carried him out.

"Later guys, I'm gonna take Will home and talk to mom about what we should do about his possible sickness." As he was about to leave, Nancy walked out with him saying,

"I'm coming with you." pulling her coat on. Will gave her a weird look while Jonathan nodded. The kids and detective waved bye to the Byer siblings and Nancy as they went to Jonathan's car. The

detective then fell on the couch, sighing hugely in relief.

"Thanks for not ratting out on me, guys. I appreciate it." he then said, rubbing his face with his hands.

"Don't worry about it. You were only trying to help Will, so it would be stupid to." Lucas and Dustin said. Mike high fived him and got his hair tussled with a smirk in response. Elle hugged him and got hugged back. The detective then thought for a second, then remembered.

"What day is it? The 9th? That reminds me. I saw...your date's dress, Mikey, and I've been thinking. We should head out ourselves about now. Wouldn't want to disappoint your 'date' now would we?" he said, wrapping his arm around his shoulder in that fake gangster accent with a sly smile on his face. Mike blushed, shoving him away. The detective chuckled and got up. "I'll take that as a yes. We should be going then. You boys should be getting home about now, as I've gotta take Mikey out for a few minutes. You know, for the Snowball." he then said to Dustin and Lucas, who nudged Mike's shoulder and ribbed him a little as they said,

"Oh yeah, riiight. Later Mike." with cheeky smiles as they headed out the door. After the detective got done talking to Elle and saying that he'd be back, Mike got his coat and shoes on and went outside. He was excited about what kind of dress Elle was going to wear, but he was also nervous about what HE was going to wear. Then the detective came out the door and closed it behind him. He activated his eyes and created a platform, stepping on it. He then held his hand out to the nervous 13-year-old.

"Hey, don't worry about it, Mikey. She'll love you no matter what you wear." he said, gently. Mike nodded and took his hand, boarding the platform. He then hugged the detective who was taken off guard at this.

"Thank you so much, Enigma. For doing this for me, and bringing us together." he said, hugging his waist. The detective smiled down at him and hugged him back.

"Well, I can't take ALL of the credit, but no problem bucko." he said

with a smile and one eye closed. With a wave of his hand, they were off to town to the tailor's to find Mike a good tuxedo or suit for the Snowball.

...

Mom's gonna kill me if she finds out about- wait...what the...! NOT THIS PLACE AGAIN! Wait...now it's back to normal...? I gotta get home. Now. Ugh, why can't my dumb brother drive faste...what is that? Why am I back here? Why can't I hear my stupid brother talking with his girlfriend?...AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH